MARVEL™
29th Nov. 86
No89 30p

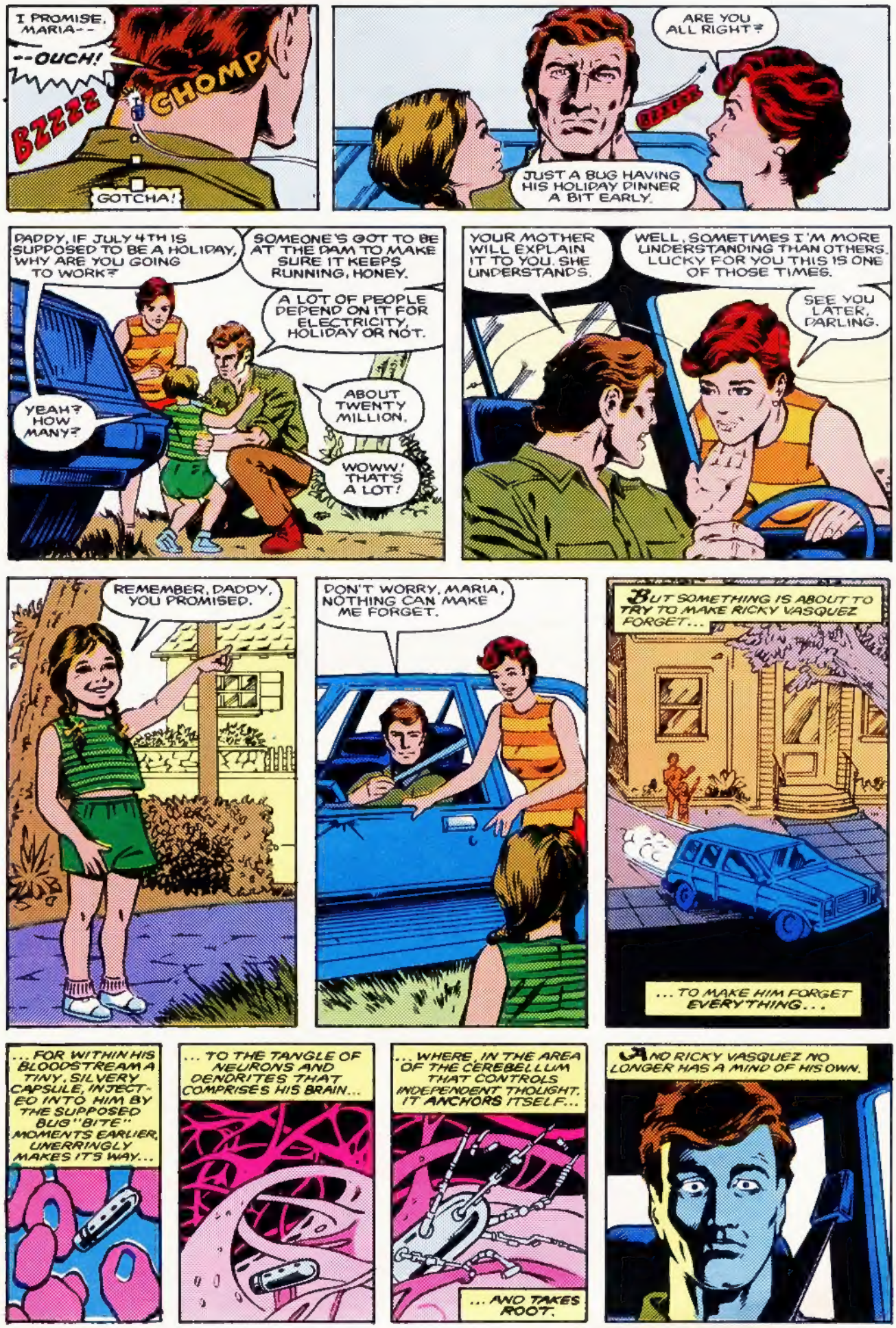
THE TRANSFORMERS™

HEROIC AUTOBOT

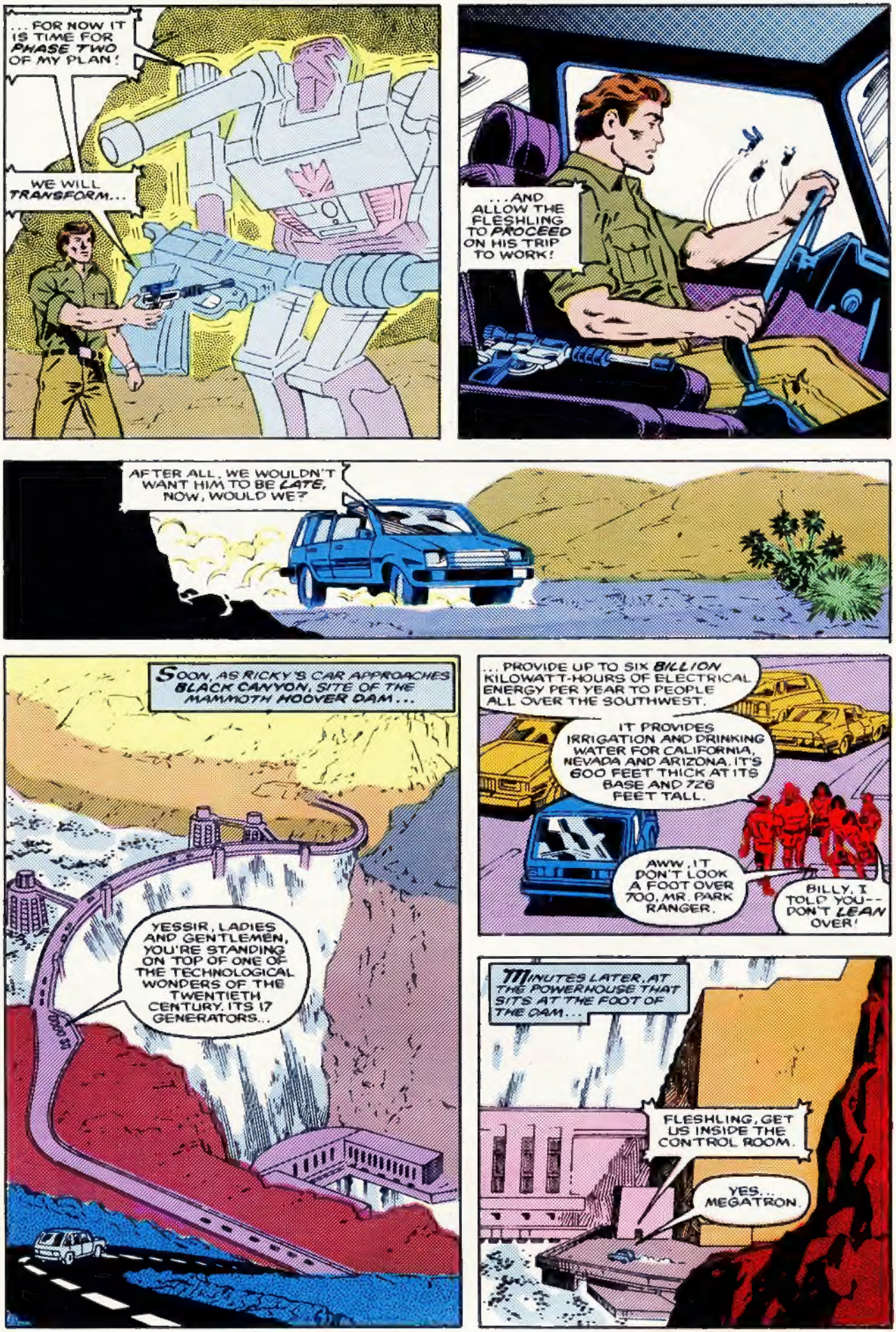
SLAVE OF THE INSECTICONS!

AERIALBOTS OVER AMERICA!

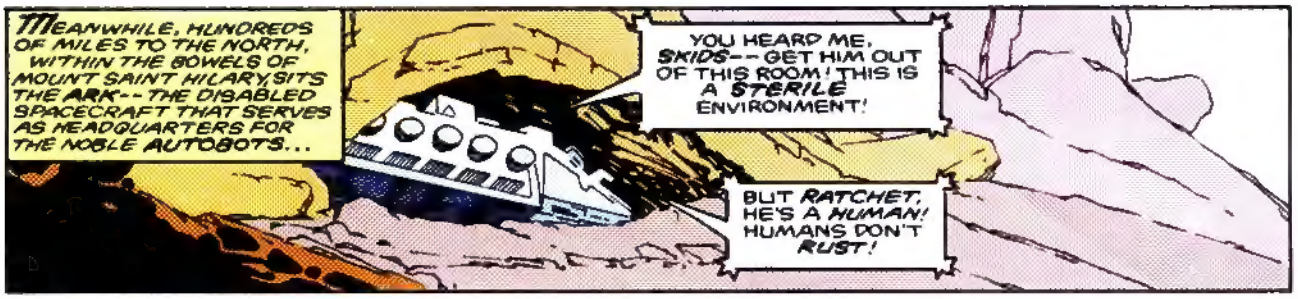
EIGHT A.M., JULY 4TH, OUTSIDE THE HOME OF THE VASQUEZ FAMILY IN BOULDER CITY, NEVADA...
THAT IS THE FLESHLING I SEEK!
MAKE SURE YOU'RE HOME NO LATER THAN SIX O'CLOCK TONIGHT, RICKY, OKAY?
SURE THING, CARMEN.
DADDY, DO YOU PROMISE TO TAKE ME TO THE FIREWORKS SHOW LATER?
BOB BUDIANSKY- WRITER
DON PERLIN- PENCILER
IAN AKIN & BRIAN GARVEY- INKERS
JANICE CHIANG- LETTERER
NEL YOMTOV- COLOURIST
MICHAEL CARLIN- EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER- EDITOR IN CHIEF

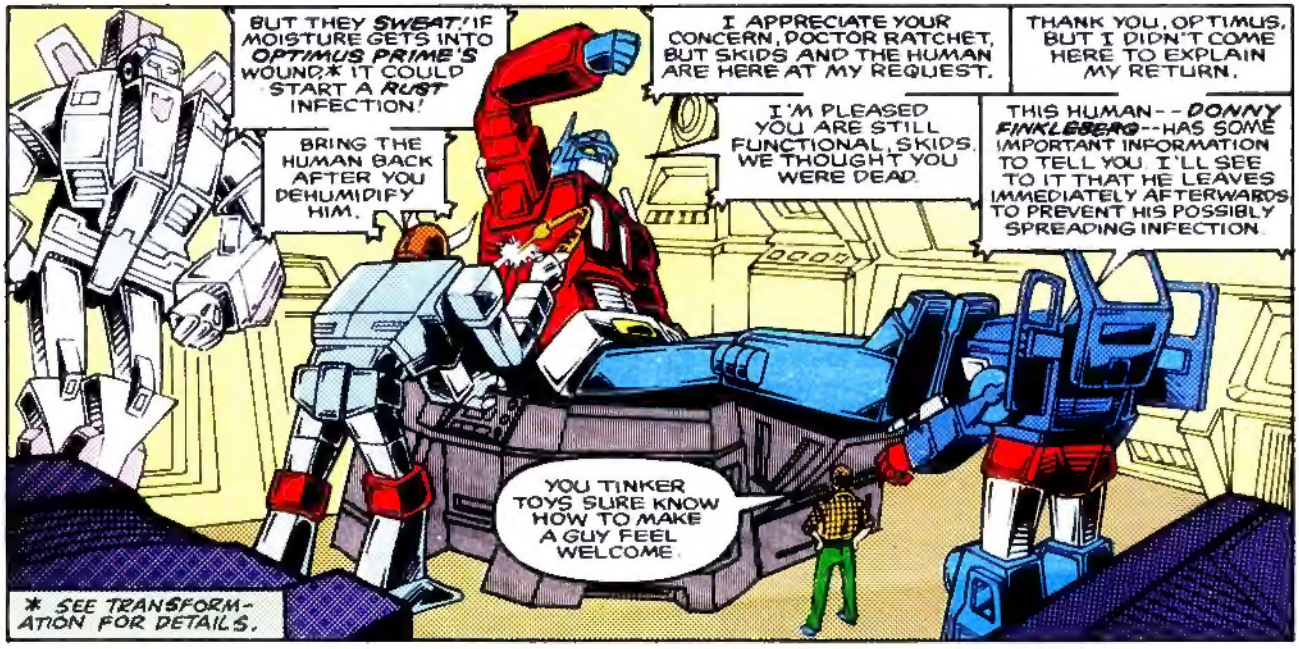

I PROMISE, MARIA--
--OUCH!
BZZZZ
CHOMP
GOTCHA!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
JUST A BUG HAVING HIS HOLIDAY DINNER A BIT EARLY.
DADDY, IF JULY 4TH IS SUPPOSED TO BE A HOLIDAY, WHY ARE YOU GOING TO WORK?
SOMEONE'S GOT TO BE AT THE DAM TO MAKE SURE IT KEEPS RUNNING, HONEY.
A LOT OF PEOPLE DEPEND ON IT FOR ELECTRICITY, HOLIDAY OR NOT.
YEAH? HOW MANY?
ABOUT TWENTY MILLION.
WOWW! THAT'S A LOT!
YOUR MOTHER WILL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU. SHE UNDERSTANDS.
WELL, SOMETIMES I'M MORE UNDERSTANDING THAN OTHERS. LUCKY FOR YOU THIS IS ONE OF THOSE TIMES.
SEE YOU LATER, DARLING.
REMEMBER, DADDY, YOU PROMISED.
DON'T WORRY, MARIA, NOTHING CAN MAKE ME FORGET.
BUT SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO TRY TO MAKE RICKY VASQUEZ FORGET...
... TO MAKE HIM FORGET EVERYTHING...
... FOR WITHIN HIS BLOODSTREAM A TINY, SILVERY CAPSULE, INJECTED INTO HIM BY THE SUPPOSED BUG "BITE" MOMENTS EARLIER, UNERRINGLY MAKES ITS WAY...
... TO THE TANGLE OF NEURONS AND DENDRITES THAT COMPRISES HIS BRAIN...
... WHERE, IN THE AREA OF THE CEREBELLUM THAT CONTROLS INDEPENDENT THOUGHT, IT ANCHORS ITSELF...
... AND TAKES ROOT.
AND RICKY VASQUEZ NO LONGER HAS A MIND OF HIS OWN.

SEVERAL MILES LATER, HE TURNS HIS CAR OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY AND ONTO A DESOLATE DIRT ROAD.
HE DOESN'T KNOW WHY HE DOES THIS, NOR DOES HE CARE.
BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO DO...
THIS MUST BE THE FLESHLING WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR, SHRAPNEL.
IT'S ABOUT TIME HE SHOWED UP, KICKBACK. MY GRENADE LAUNCHER GUN IS GETTING CLOGGED UP FROM ALL THE DUST AROUND HERE.
BOMBSHELL, ARE YOU THERE? REPORT!
YES, COMMANDER MEGATRON, I'VE BEEN WATCHING THIS FLESHLING FOR SEVERAL DAYS.
HE'S THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE NEARBY HYDROELECTRIC INSTALLATION.
I THINK HE WILL BE A GREAT HELP TO US IN TAKING IT OVER SO WE CAN PUMP ITS ENERGY OUTPUT TO OUR HOME PLANET, CYBERTRON.
GOOD. NOW THAT THE DECEPTICONS OF CYBERTRON HAVE REPAIRED THE INTER-DIMENSIONAL SPACE BRIDGE* THAT LINKS OUR WORLD WITH THIS ONE, THE REMOVAL OF EARTH'S ENERGY RESOURCES IS NO LONGER A DREAM...
...IT IS DESTINY.
YOU THREE ARRIVED ON THIS PLANET VIA THE BRIDGE THREE DAYS AGO. SUBSEQUENTLY, I ADAPTED YOUR BODIES SO YOU CAN TRANSFORM AND DISGUISE YOURSELVES AS INSECTS NATIVE TO THIS WORLD.
NOW, WITH THE ACQUISITION OF THE FLESHLING, THE FIRST PHASE OF MY PLAN IS COMPLETE!
BUT CAN WE DEPEND ON THIS FEEBLE FLESHLING?
*AFTER LAST ISSUE.
DOES IRON RUST RED?
WITH ONE OF MY CEREBRO-SHELLS PLANTED IN HIS BRAIN MODULE, HE'D EAT NUCLEAR WASTE IF I ASKED HIM TO.
FLESHLING, THERE'S A GREASE SPOT ON MY FOOT. SEE IF YOU CAN CLEAN IT...
...WITH YOUR TONGUE!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
ENOUGH OF THESE GAMES, INSECTICONS...


... FOR NOW IT IS TIME FOR PHASE TWO OF MY PLAN!
WE WILL TRANSFORM...
...AND ALLOW THE FLESHLING TO PROCEED ON HIS TRIP TO WORK!
AFTER ALL, WE WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO BE LATE, NOW, WOULD WE?
SOON, AS RICKY'S CAR APPROACHES BLACK CANYON, SITE OF THE MAMMOTH HOOVER DAM...
YESSIR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU'RE STANDING ON TOP OF ONE OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL WONDERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. ITS 17 GENERATORS...
... PROVIDE UP TO SIX BILLION KILOWATT-HOURS OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY PER YEAR TO PEOPLE ALL OVER THE SOUTHWEST.
IT PROVIDES IRRIGATION AND DRINKING WATER FOR CALIFORNIA, NEVADA AND ARIZONA. IT'S 600 FEET THICK AT ITS BASE AND 726 FEET TALL.
AWW, IT DON'T LOOK A FOOT OVER 700, MR. PARK RANGER.
BILLY, I TOLD YOU-- DON'T LEAN OVER!
MINUTES LATER, AT THE POWERHOUSE THAT SITS AT THE FOOT OF THE DAM...
FLESHLING, GET US INSIDE THE CONTROL ROOM.
YES... MEGATRON.

GOOD MORNING, MR. VASQUEZ. HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!
RICKY VASQUEZ PAYS NO ATTENTION TO THE GUARD OR HIS GREETING...
... NOR DOES HE NOTICE THE ROAR OF THE GENERATORS AS THEY CONVERT MECHANICAL ENERGY INTO ELECTRICAL ENERGY.
NO. HIS MIND IS SOLELY FOCUSED ON ONE THOUGHT-- ENTERING THE POWERHOUSE'S CONTROL ROOM.
CONTROL ROOM AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY
KICKBACK, OPEN THE DOOR.
BONK
MY PLEASURE, MEGATRON.
RICKY!
SKRAKOOM
WHAT'RE YOU DOING WITH THAT GUN?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
I... WANT... YOU... TO... TURN... OFF... THE... DAM.
NOW.

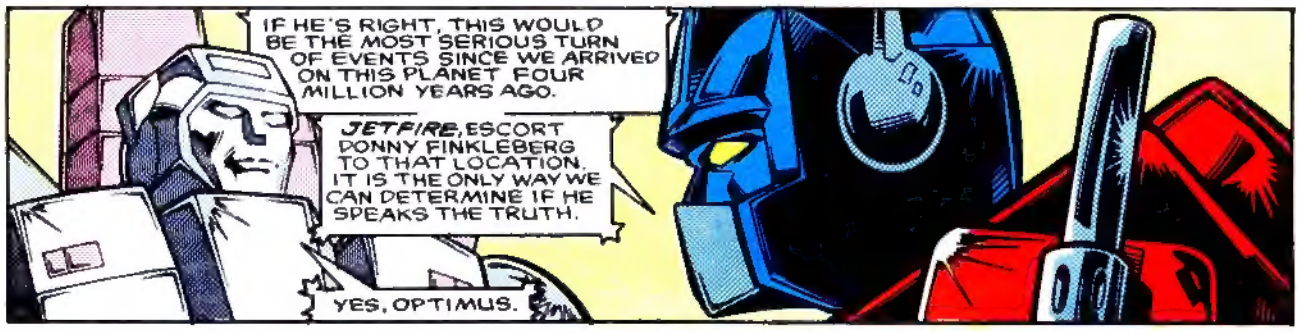

MEANWHILE, HUNDREDS OF MILES TO THE NORTH, WITHIN THE BOWELS OF MOUNT SAINT HILARY, SITS THE ARK -- THE DISABLED SPACECRAFT THAT SERVES AS HEADQUARTERS FOR THE NOBLE AUTOBOTS...
YOU HEARD ME, SKIDS -- GET HIM OUT OF THIS ROOM! THIS IS A STERILE ENVIRONMENT!
BUT RATCHET, HE'S A HUMAN! HUMANS DON'T RUST!

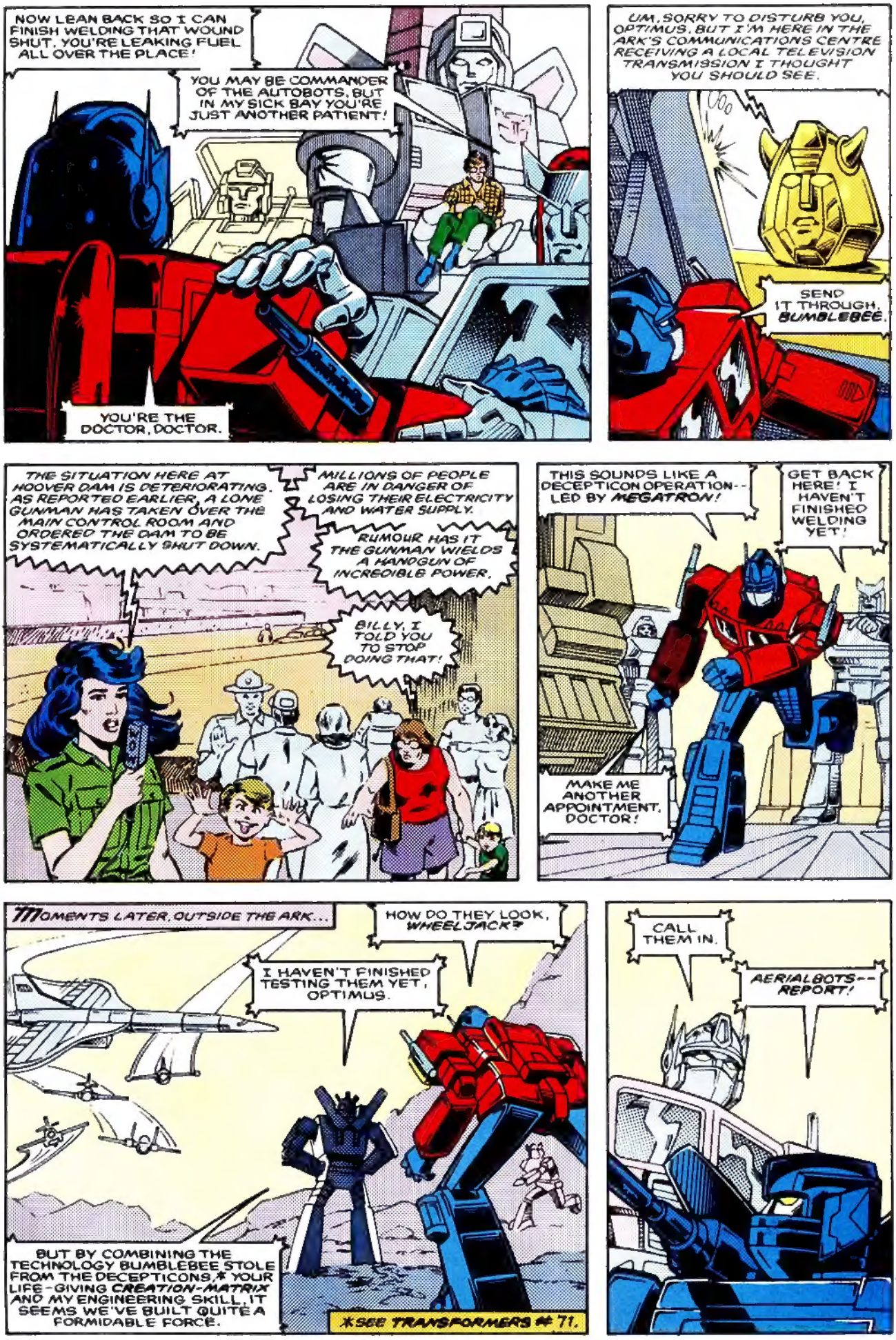

BUT THEY SWEAT! IF MOISTURE GETS INTO OPTIMUS PRIME'S WOUND* IT COULD START A RUST INFECTION!
BRING THE HUMAN BACK AFTER YOU DEHUMIDIFY HIM.
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, DOCTOR RATCHET, BUT SKIDS AND THE HUMAN ARE HERE AT MY REQUEST.
THANK YOU, OPTIMUS, BUT I DIDN'T COME HERE TO EXPLAIN MY RETURN.
I'M PLEASED YOU ARE STILL FUNCTIONAL, SKIDS. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
THIS HUMAN -- DONNY FINKLEBERG -- HAS SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO TELL YOU. I'LL SEE TO IT THAT HE LEAVES IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS TO PREVENT HIS POSSIBLY SPREADING INFECTION.
YOU TINKER TOYS SURE KNOW HOW TO MAKE A GUY FEEL WELCOME.
* SEE TRANSFORMATION FOR DETAILS.

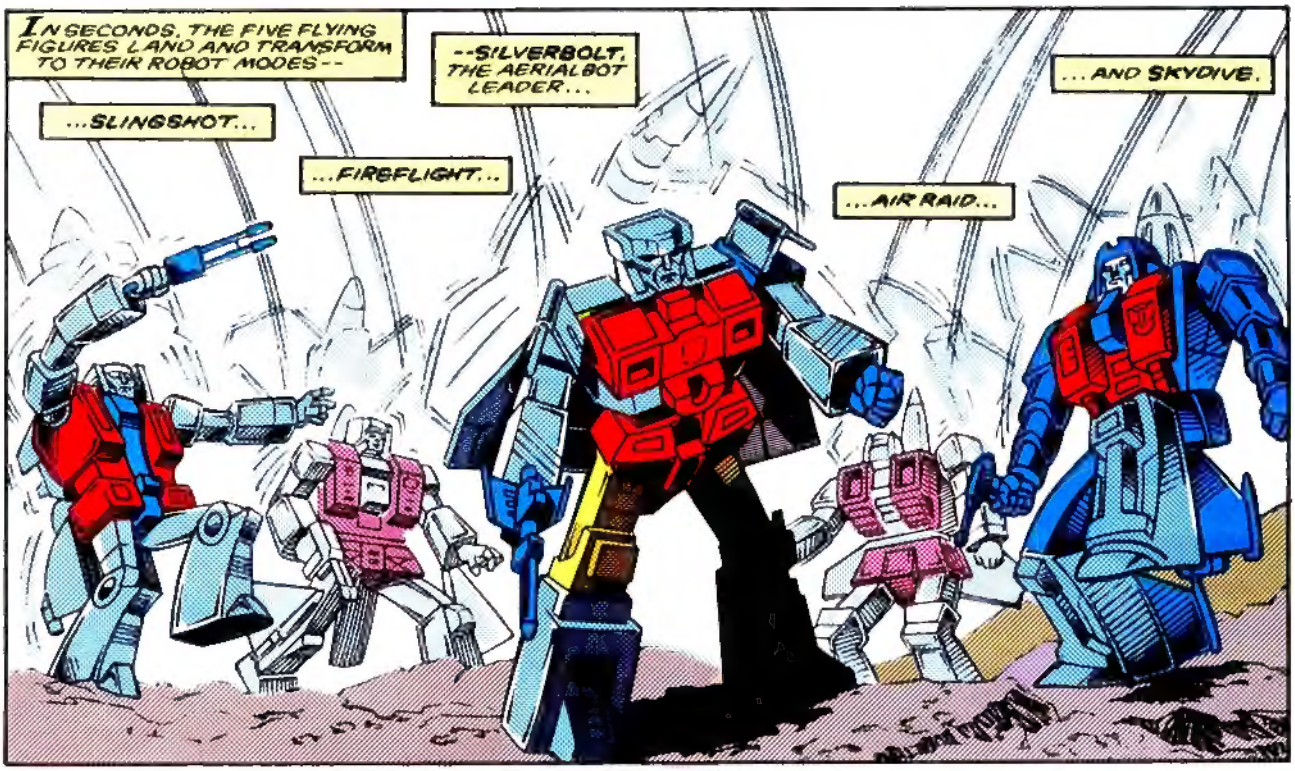
YOU ALL KNOW ME -- AS ROBOT-MASTER. WHILE I WAS STILL A CAPTIVE OF THE DECEPTICONS, I FOUND OUT THEY WERE OPENING A SPACE BRIDGE BETWEEN CYBERTRON AND EARTH, KINDA LIKE A COMMUTER LINK FOR WOULD-BE CONQUERORS.
BUT SEVEN AUTOBOTS WERE MISTAKENLY TRANSPORTED HERE INSTEAD.
THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW.
CAN I GO HOME NOW?

HOW CAN WE BELIEVE HIM? AS ROBOT-MASTER, HE WENT ON TELEVISION AND LIED ABOUT US, GAVE ALL THE AUTOBOTS A BAD NAME!
LET ME DO A LITTLE CORRECTIVE SURGERY ON HIM, OPTIMUS -- I'LL GET THE TRUTH OUT OF HIM PIECE BY PIECE!

WAIT! I -- I CAN PROVE IT! I OVERHEARD WHERE THE AUTOBOTS ARRIVED... NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE!

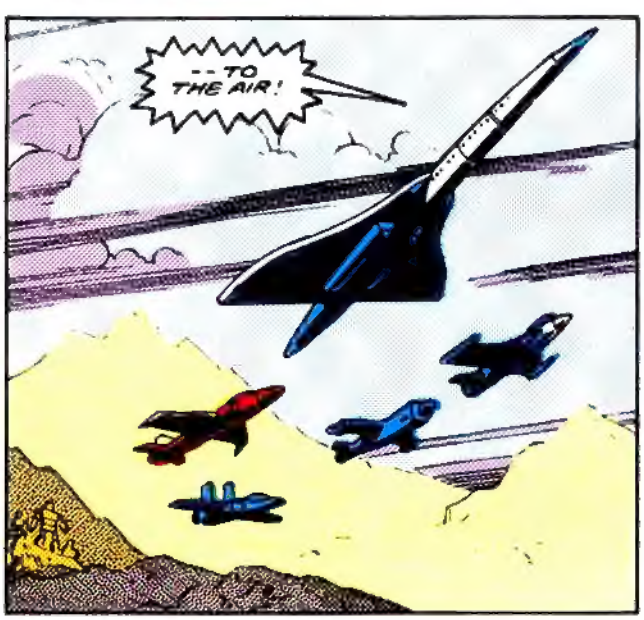

IF HE'S RIGHT, THIS WOULD BE THE MOST SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS SINCE WE ARRIVED ON THIS PLANET FOUR MILLION YEARS AGO.
JETFIRE, ESCORT DONNY FINKLEBERG TO THAT LOCATION. IT IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN DETERMINE IF HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
YES, OPTIMUS.

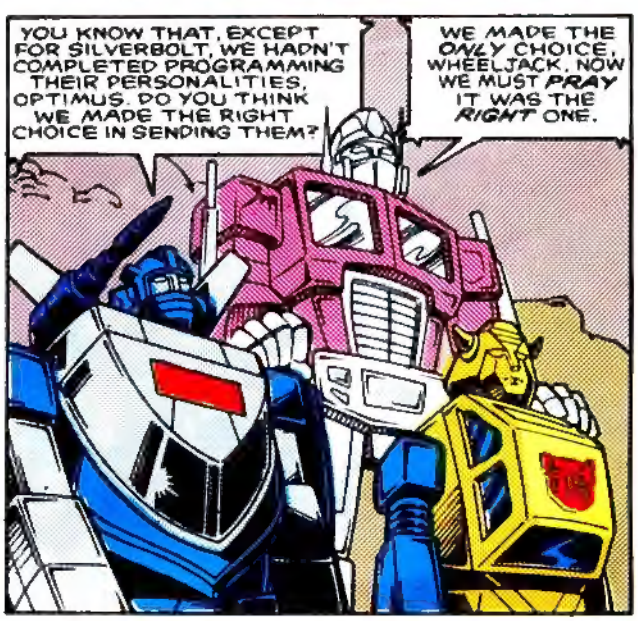

NOW LEAN BACK SO I CAN FINISH WELDING THAT WOUND SHUT. YOU'RE LEAKING FUEL ALL OVER THE PLACE!
YOU MAY BE COMMANDER OF THE AUTOBOTS, BUT IN MY SICK BAY YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER PATIENT!
YOU'RE THE DOCTOR, DOCTOR.
UM, SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, OPTIMUS, BUT I'M HERE IN THE ARK'S COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE RECEIVING A LOCAL TELEVISION TRANSMISSION I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD SEE.
SEND IT THROUGH, BUMBLEBEE.
THE SITUATION HERE AT HOOVER DAM IS DETERIORATING. AS REPORTED EARLIER, A LONE GUNMAN HAS TAKEN OVER THE MAIN CONTROL ROOM AND ORDERED THE DAM TO BE SYSTEMATICALLY SHUT DOWN.
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING THEIR ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY.
RUMOUR HAS IT THE GUNMAN WIELDS A HANDGUN OF INCREDIBLE POWER.
BILLY, I TOLD YOU TO STOP DOING THAT!
THIS SOUNDS LIKE A DECEPTICON OPERATION-- LED BY MEGATRON!
GET BACK HERE! I HAVEN'T FINISHED WELDING YET!
MAKE ME ANOTHER APPOINTMENT, DOCTOR!
MOMENTS LATER, OUTSIDE THE ARK...
HOW DO THEY LOOK, WHEELJACK?
I HAVEN'T FINISHED TESTING THEM YET, OPTIMUS.
BUT BY COMBINING THE TECHNOLOGY BUMBLEBEE STOLE FROM THE DECEPTICONS,* YOUR LIFE-GIVING CREATION-MATRIX AND MY ENGINEERING SKILL, IT SEEMS WE'VE BUILT QUITE A FORMIDABLE FORCE.
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #71.
CALL THEM IN.
AERIALBOTS-- REPORT!

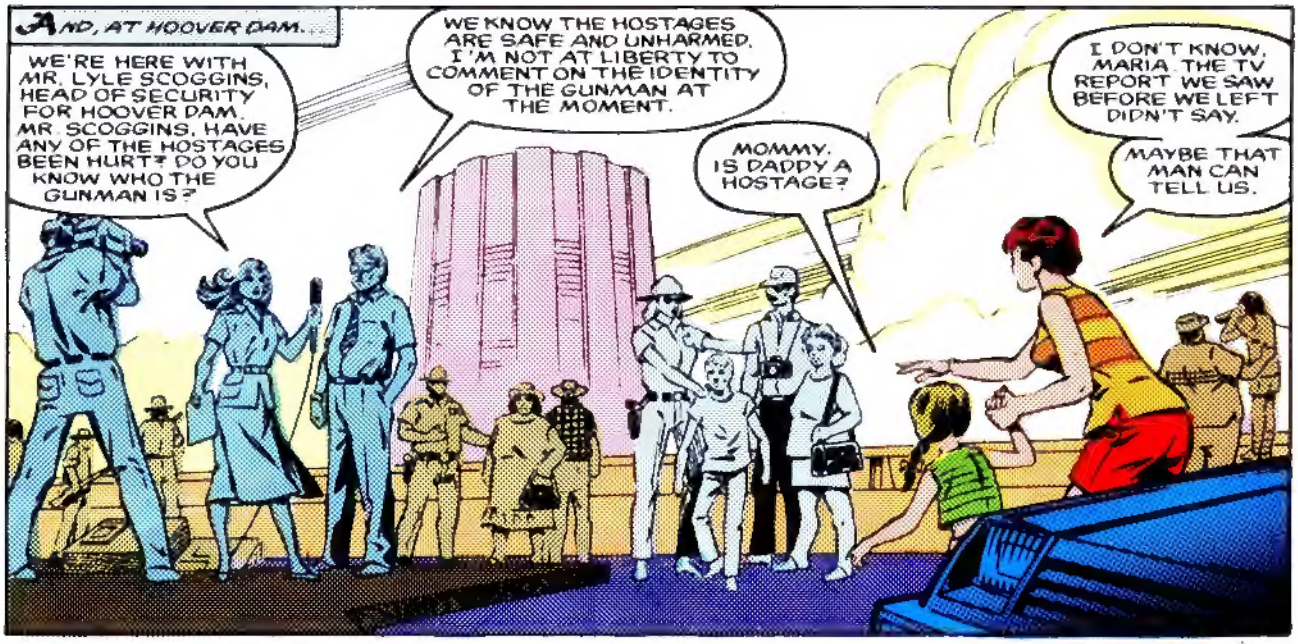

IN SECONDS, THE FIVE FLYING FIGURES LAND AND TRANSFORM TO THEIR ROBOT MODES--
--SILVERBOLT, THE AERIALBOT LEADER...
...SLINGSHOT...
...FIREFLIGHT...
...AIR RAID...
...AND SKYDIVE.

SILVERBOLT--ONLY THE AERIALBOTS CAN GET TO HOOVER DAM FAST ENOUGH TO PREVENT THE DECEPTICONS FROM TAKING IT OVER.
I WANT THE AERIALBOTS TO FLY THERE AND STOP THEM--BUT USE CAUTION. HUMAN LIVES MUST BE PROTECTED.
UNDERSTOOD, OPTIMUS. I'LL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO AVOID HARMING THIS PLANET'S PEOPLE.

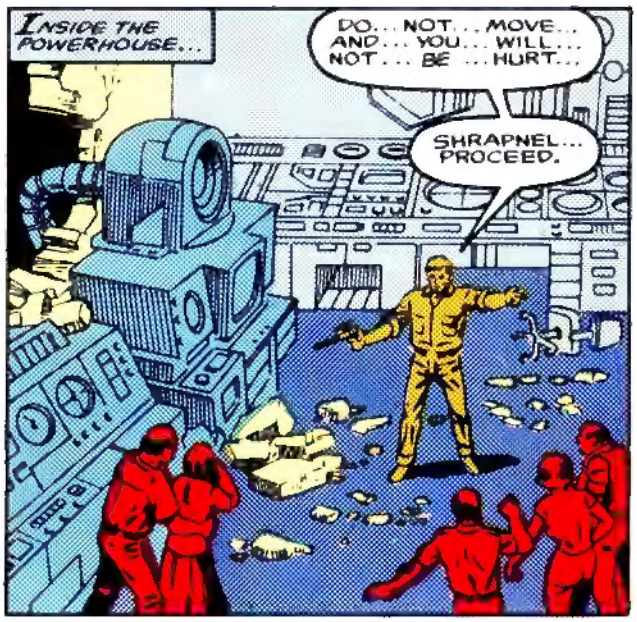
TTT MINUTES LATER, AFTER THE LOCATION OF HOOVER DAM HAS BEEN ENCODED INTO THEIR MAPPING CIRCUITRY...
AERIALBOTS--

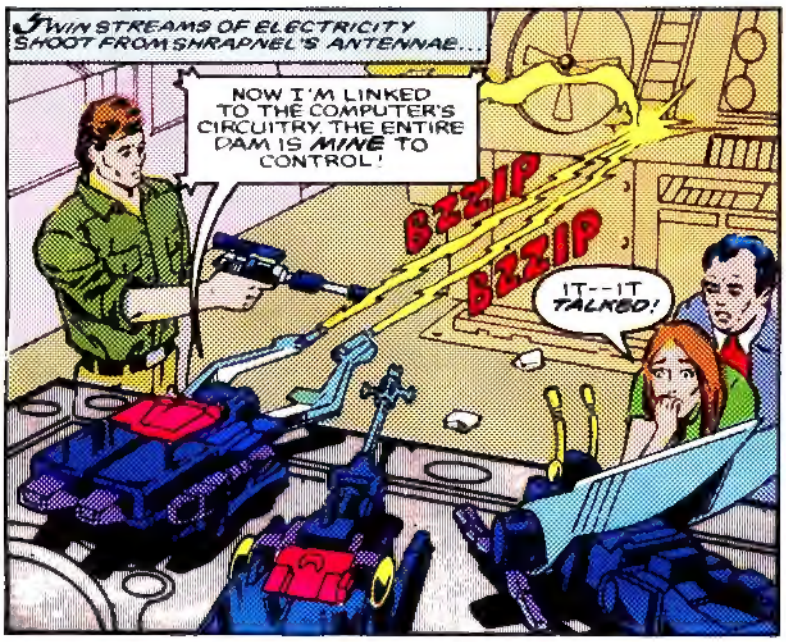

--TO THE AIR!


YOU KNOW THAT, EXCEPT FOR SILVERBOLT, WE HADN'T COMPLETED PROGRAMMING THEIR PERSONALITIES, OPTIMUS. DO YOU THINK WE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN SENDING THEM?
WE MADE THE ONLY CHOICE, WHEELJACK. NOW WE MUST PRAY IT WAS THE RIGHT ONE.

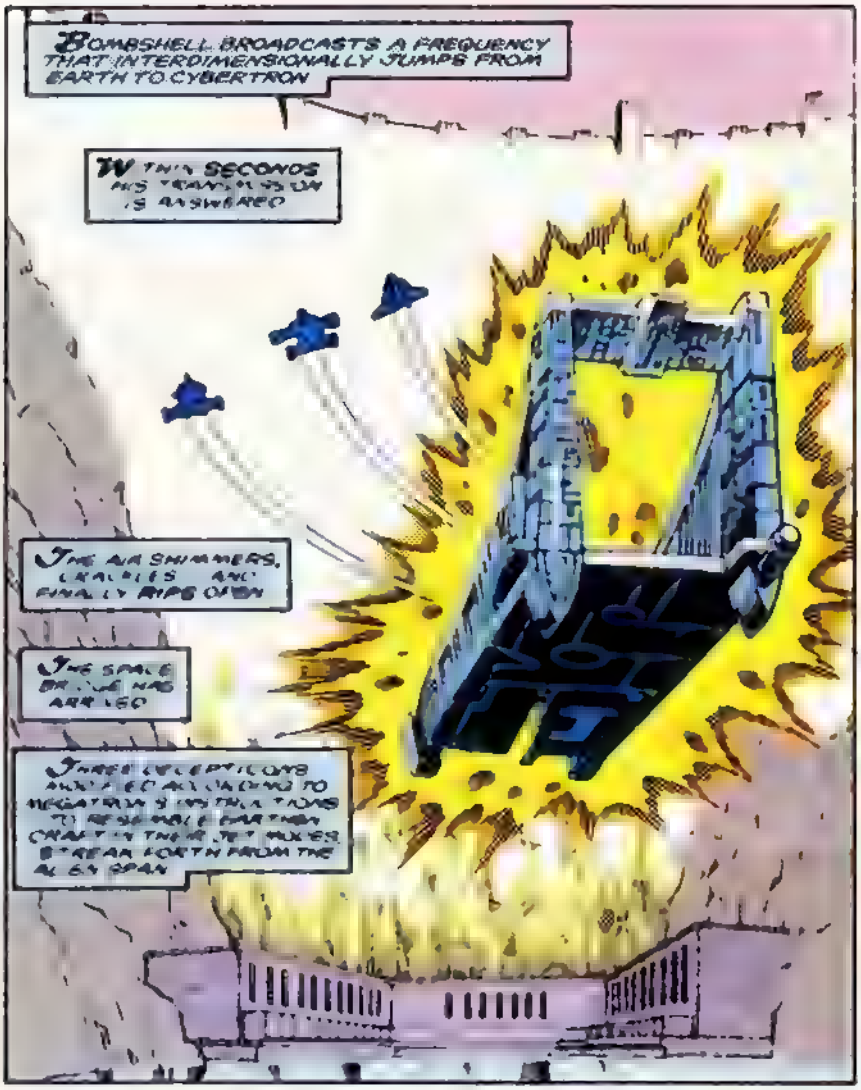

AND, AT HOOVER DAM...
WE'RE HERE WITH MR. LYLE SCOGGINS, HEAD OF SECURITY FOR HOOVER DAM. MR. SCOGGINS, HAVE ANY OF THE HOSTAGES BEEN HURT? DO YOU KNOW WHO THE GUNMAN IS?
WE KNOW THE HOSTAGES ARE SAFE AND UNHARMED. I'M NOT AT LIBERTY TO COMMENT ON THE IDENTITY OF THE GUNMAN AT THE MOMENT.
MOMMY. IS DADDY A HOSTAGE?
I DON'T KNOW, MARIA. THE TV REPORT WE SAW BEFORE WE LEFT DIDN'T SAY.
MAYBE THAT MAN CAN TELL US.

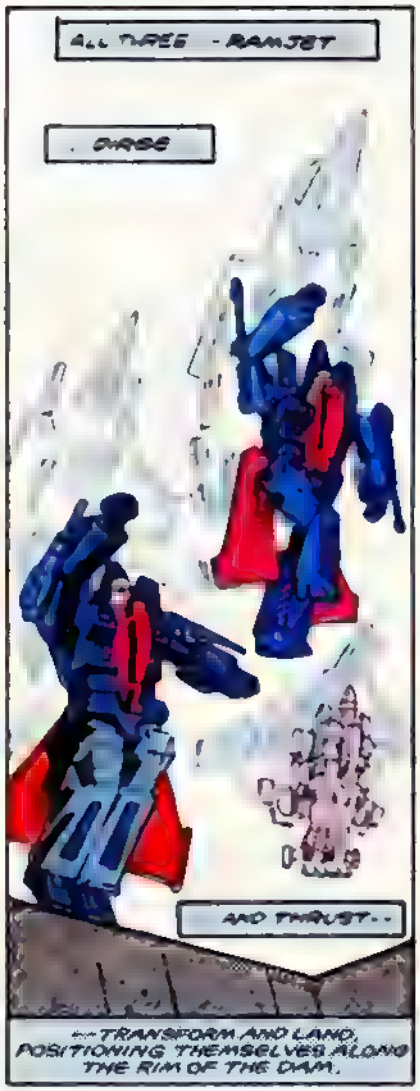
MR. SCOGGINS, ISN'T IT TRUE YOU'VE TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED THE GUNMAN AS THIS MAN -- RICHARD VASQUEZ?
DADDY!

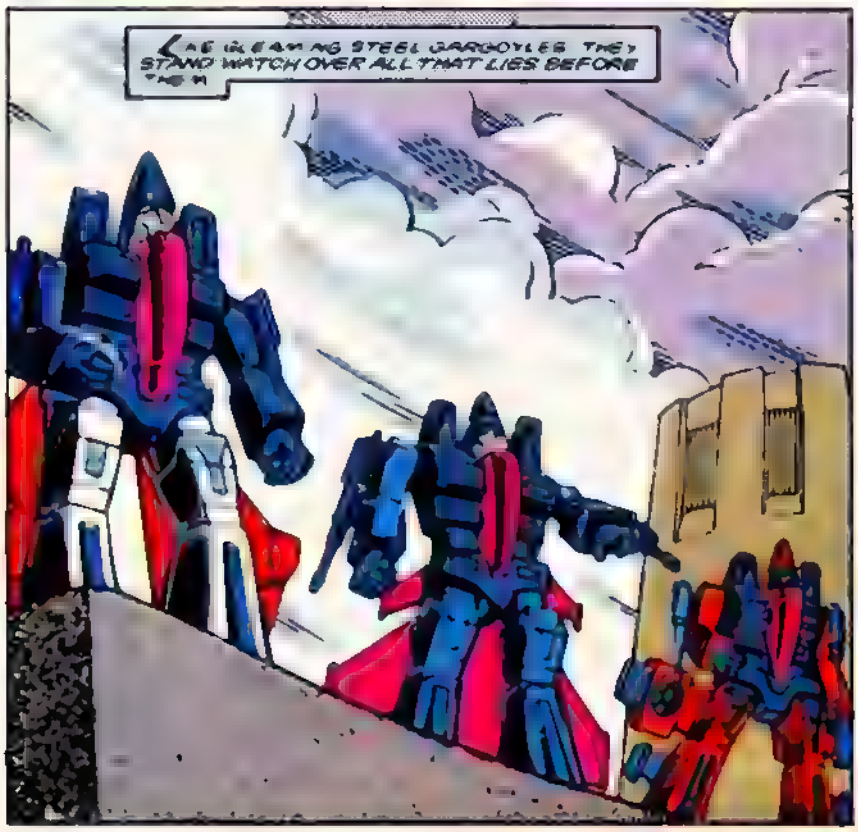

INSIDE THE POWERHOUSE...
DO... NOT... MOVE... AND... YOU... WILL... NOT... BE ...HURT...
SHRAPNEL... PROCEED.


TWIN STREAMS OF ELECTRICITY SHOOT FROM SHRAPNEL'S ANTENNAE...
NOW I'M LINKED TO THE COMPUTER'S CIRCUITRY. THE ENTIRE DAM IS MINE TO CONTROL!
BZZIP
BZZIP
IT--IT TALKED!

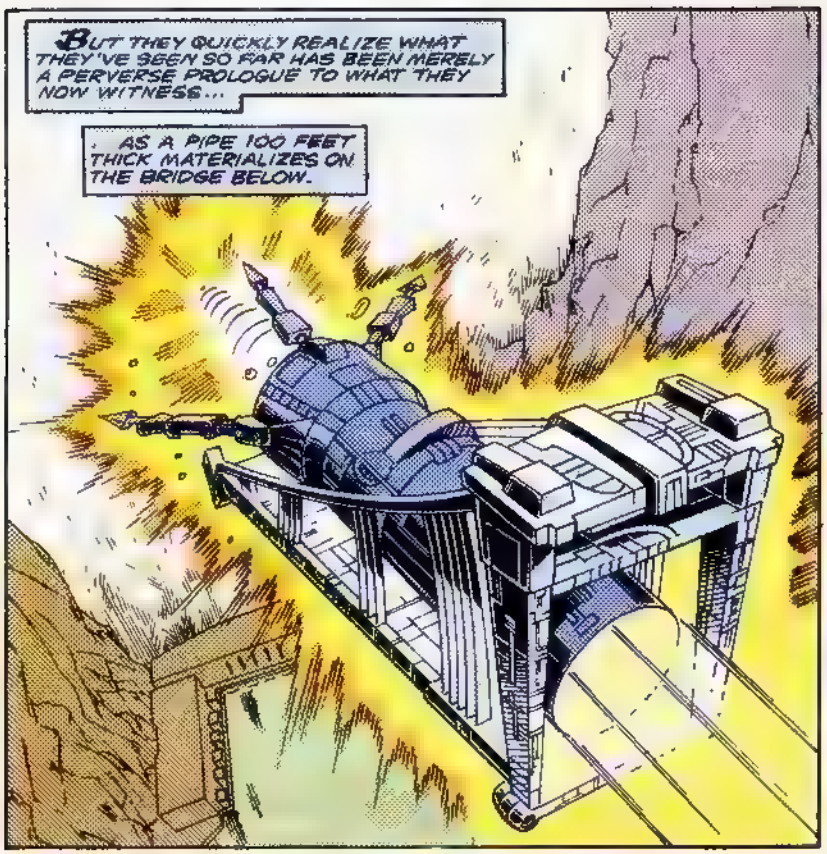
SIGNAL CYBERTRON, BOMBSHELL. BEGIN THE FINAL PHASE!


BOMBSHELL BROADCASTS A FREQUENCY THAT INTERDIMENSIONALLY JUMPS FROM EARTH TO CYBERTRON
IN THIN SECONDS HIS TRANSMISSION IS ANSWERED
THE AIR SHIMMERS, CRACKLES AND FINALLY RIPS OPEN
THE SPACE BRIDGE HAS ARRIVED
THREE DECEPTICONS ARE ALLOWED TO NEGOTIATE SMOOTH TOUCHDOWN TO REASSEMBLE EARTHEN CRAFT IN THEIR JET MODES. STREAM FORTH FROM THE ALIEN SPAN

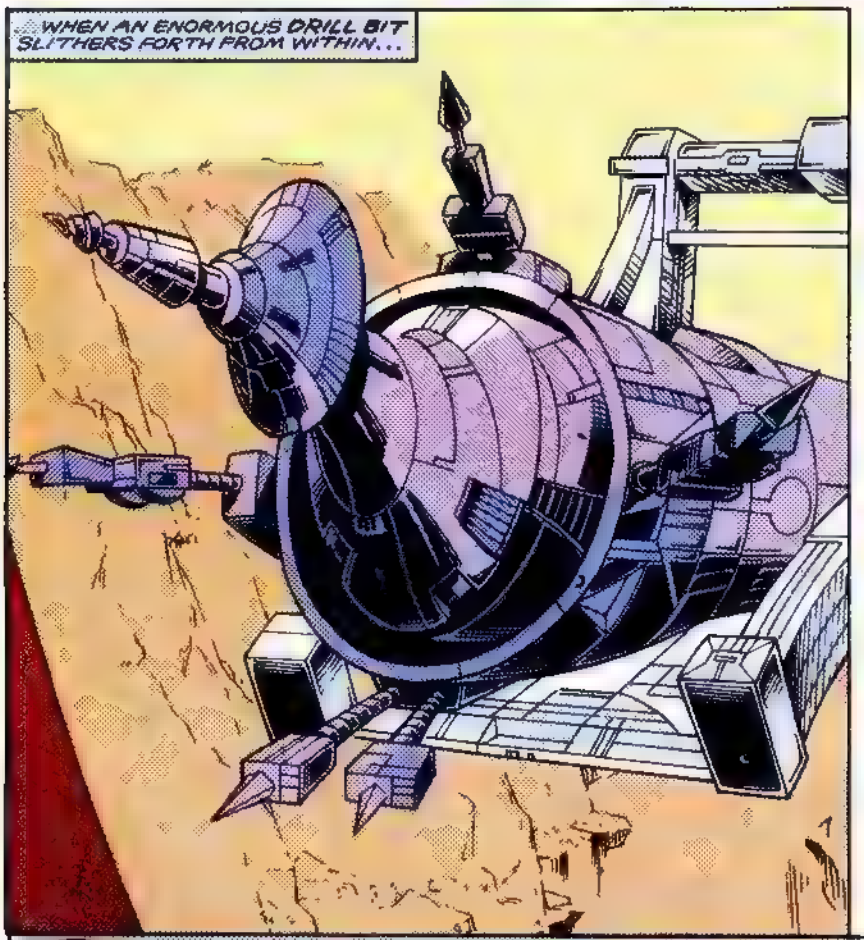

ALL THREE - RAMJET
DIVE
AND THRUST..
--TRANSFORM AND LAND, POSITIONING THEMSELVES ALONG THE RIM OF THE DAM.

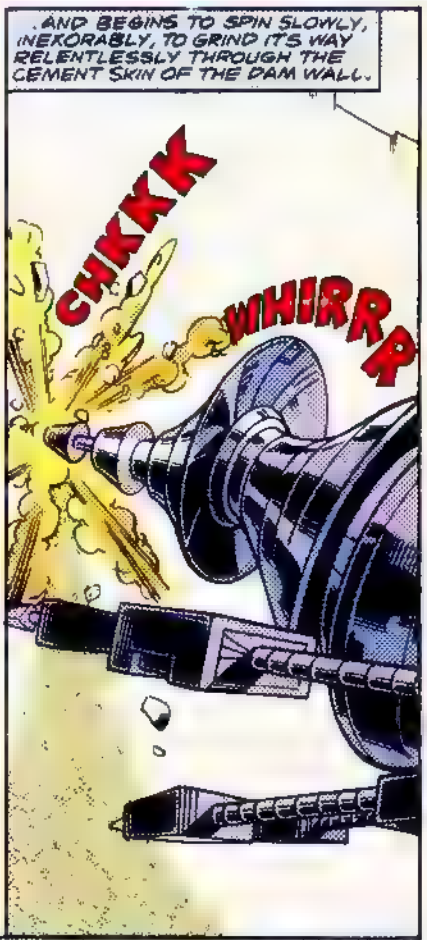

LIKE GLEAMING STEEL GARGOYLES THEY STAND WATCH OVER ALL THAT LIES BEFORE THEM

THEIR GRIM SILENCE SPREADS LIKE A CHILLING FOG OVER THE NEARBY ONLOOKERS.
THE TRIO'S PRESENCE TERRIFIES THEM.

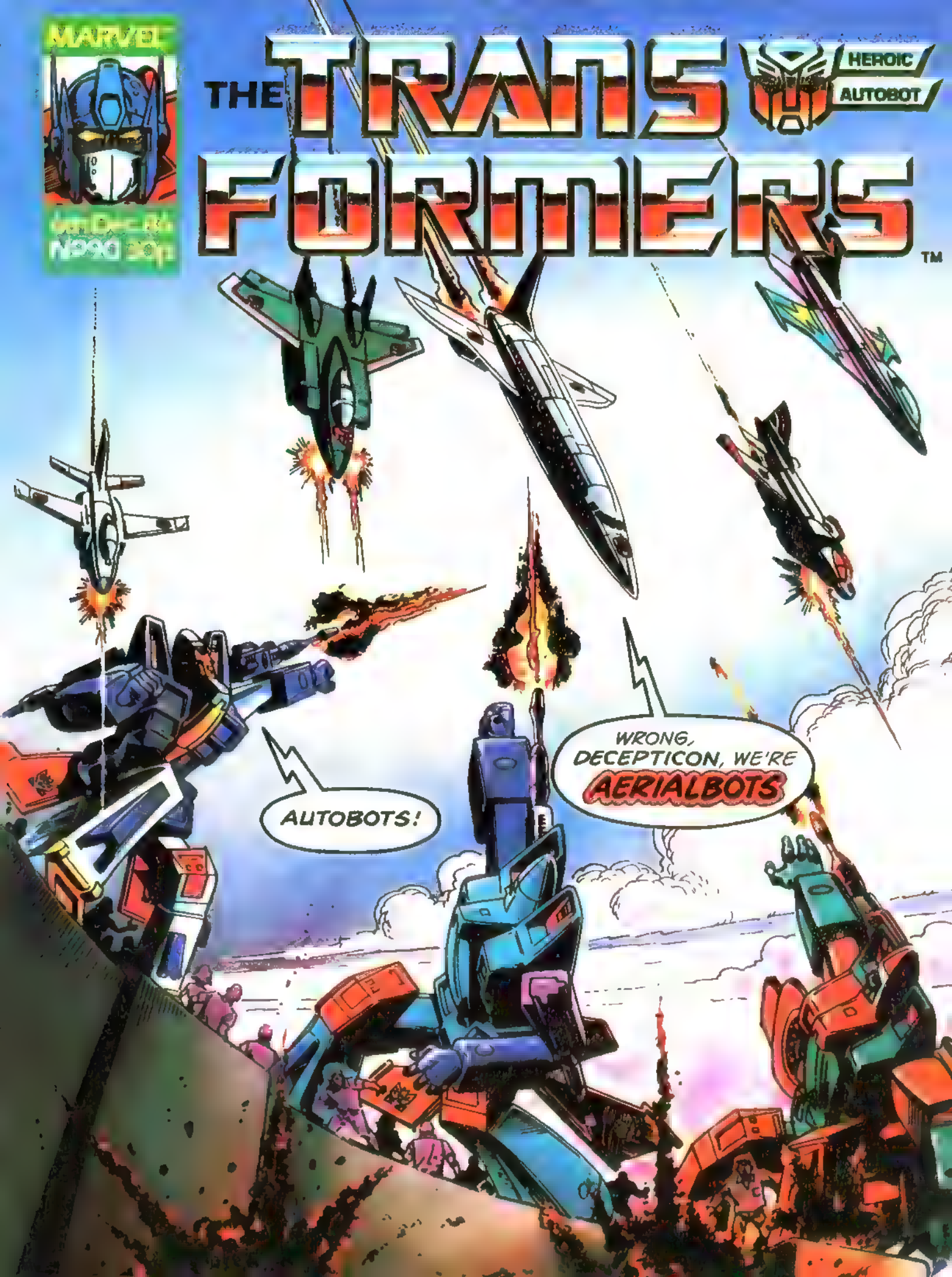

BUT THEY QUICKLY REALIZE WHAT THEY'VE SEEN SO FAR HAS BEEN MERELY A PERVERSE PROLOGUE TO WHAT THEY NOW WITNESS...
...AS A PIPE 100 FEET THICK MATERIALIZES ON THE BRIDGE BELOW.

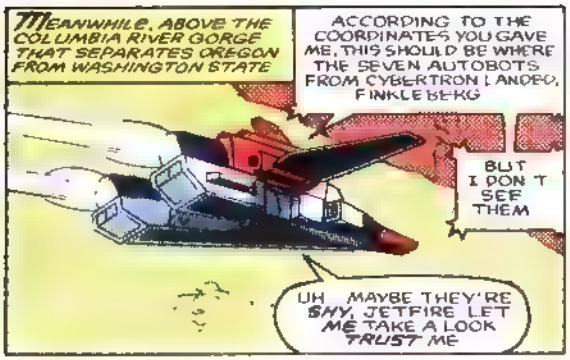
AND ALL TOO SOON ITS MONSTROUS PURPOSE BECOMES ALL TOO CLEAR...

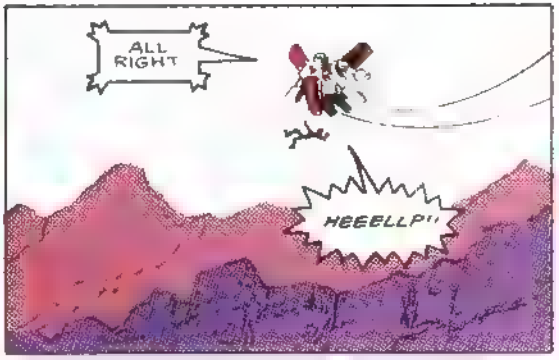

...WHEN AN ENORMOUS DRILL BIT SLITHERS FORTH FROM WITHIN...

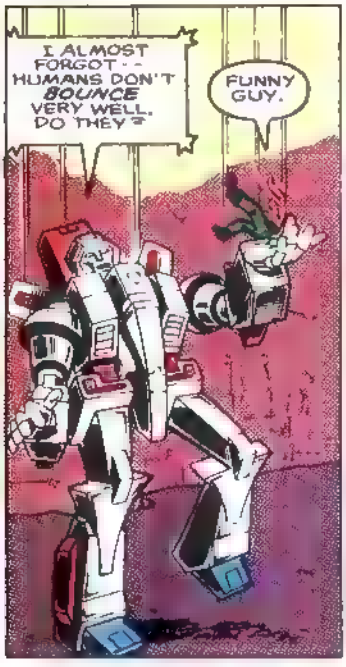

...AND BEGINS TO SPIN SLOWLY, INEXORABLY, TO GRIND ITS WAY RELENTLESSLY THROUGH THE CEMENT SKIN OF THE DAM WALL.
CHKKK
WHIRRR

NEXT: DOGFIGHT!


MARVEL
THE TRANSFORMERS
HEROIC AUTOBOT
AUTOBOTS!
WRONG, DECEPTICON, WE'RE AERIALBOTS


MEANWHILE, ABOVE THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE THAT SEPARATES OREGON FROM WASHINGTON STATE
ACCORDING TO THE COORDINATES YOU GAVE ME, THIS SHOULD BE WHERE THE SEVEN AUTOBOTS FROM CYBERTRON LANDED, FINKLEBERG
BUT I DON'T SEE THEM
UH MAYBE THEY'RE SHY, JETFIRE LET ME TAKE A LOOK TRUST ME

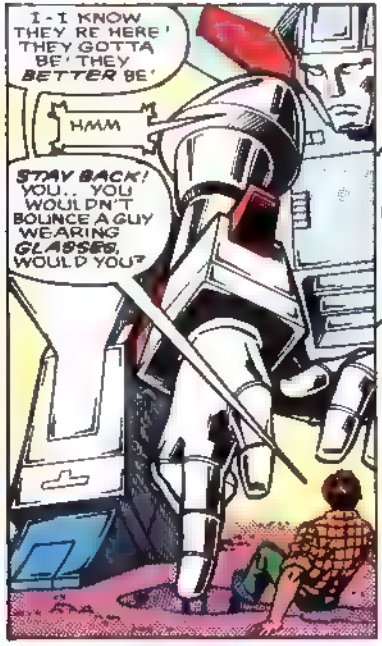

ALL RIGHT
HEEELLP!!

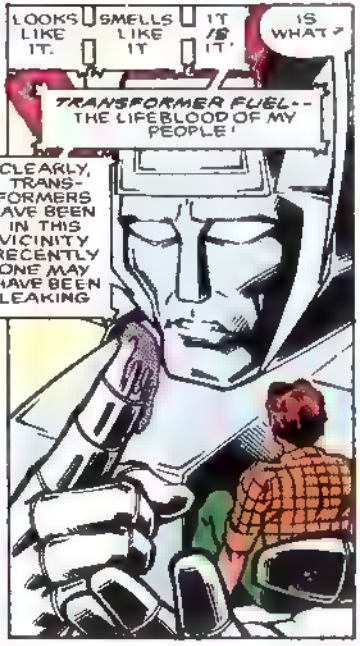

I ALMOST FORGOT -- HUMANS DON'T BOUNCE VERY WELL, DO THEY?
FUNNY GUY.

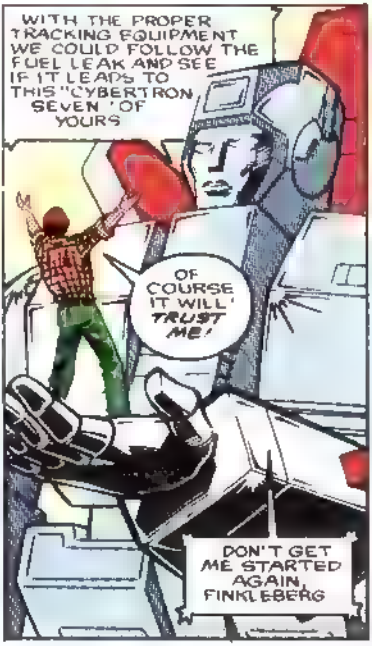
NOT LIKE THE BALLOBOTS WITH WHICH WE PLAY BASKETREK ON CYBERTRON IN FACT, THEY ENJOY BOUNCING--THE HIGHER THE BETTER
UH L LOOK, I'M GIVING IT TO YOU STRAIGHT! TH THOSE AUTOBOTS ARE HERE SOMEWHERE! TRUST ME!

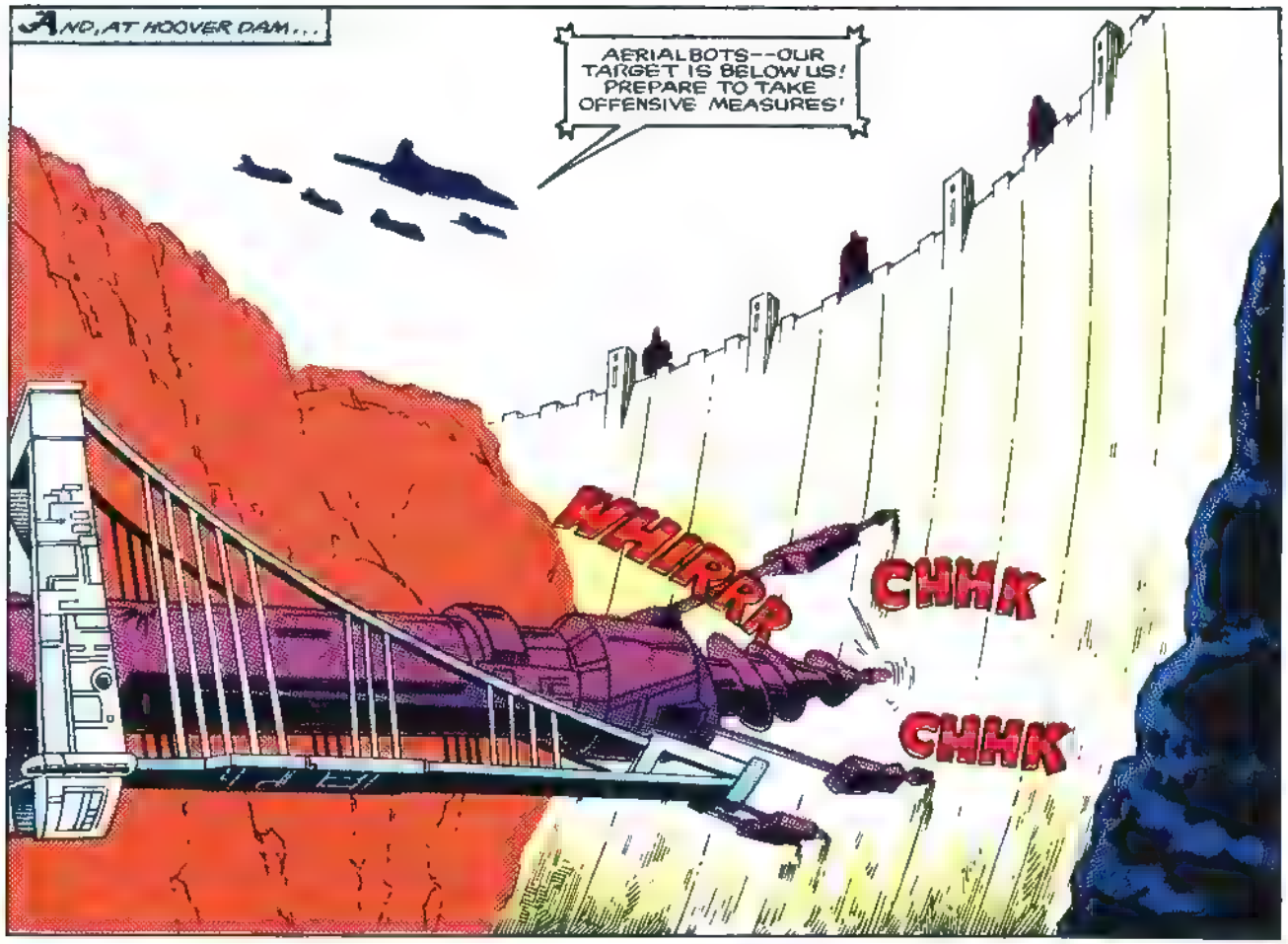
I TRUST YOU AS FAR AS I COULD BOUNCE YOU WHICH ISN'T VERY FAR!
J-JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE TO LOOK FOR THEM!

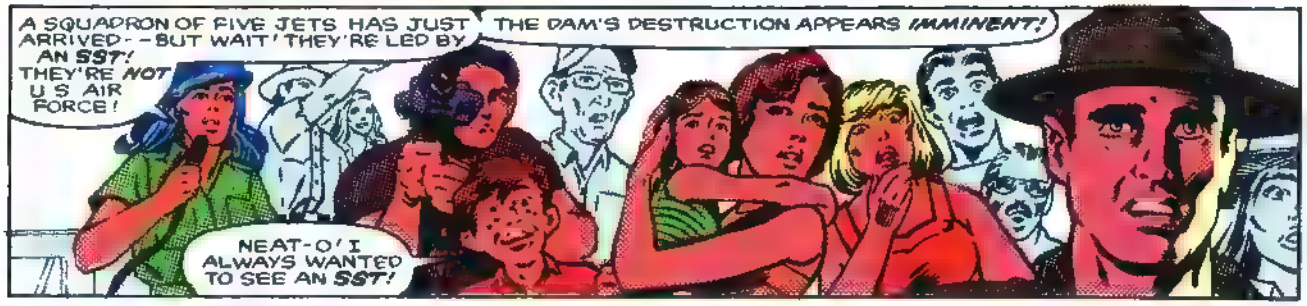
YIKES!!

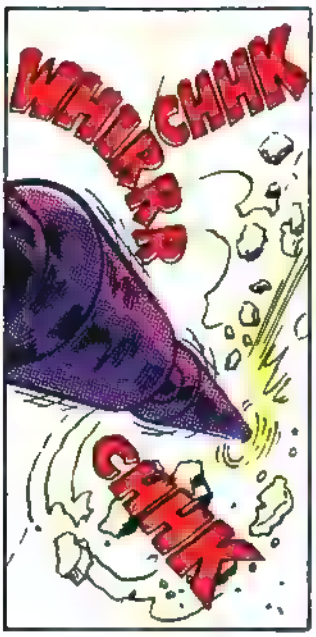

I-I KNOW THEY'RE HERE! THEY GOTTA BE! THEY BETTER BE!
HMM
STAY BACK! YOU.. YOU WOULDN'T BOUNCE A GUY WEARING GLASSES, WOULD YOU?


LOOKS LIKE IT.
SMELLS LIKE IT
IT IS IT!
IS WHAT?
TRANSFORMER FUEL--THE LIFEBLOOD OF MY PEOPLE!
CLEARLY, TRANSFORMERS HAVE BEEN IN THIS VICINITY RECENTLY ONE MAY HAVE BEEN LEAKING


WITH THE PROPER TRACKING EQUIPMENT WE COULD FOLLOW THE FUEL LEAK AND SEE IF IT LEADS TO THIS "CYBERTRON SEVEN" OF YOURS
OF COURSE IT WILL! TRUST ME!
DON'T GET ME STARTED AGAIN, FINKLEBERG

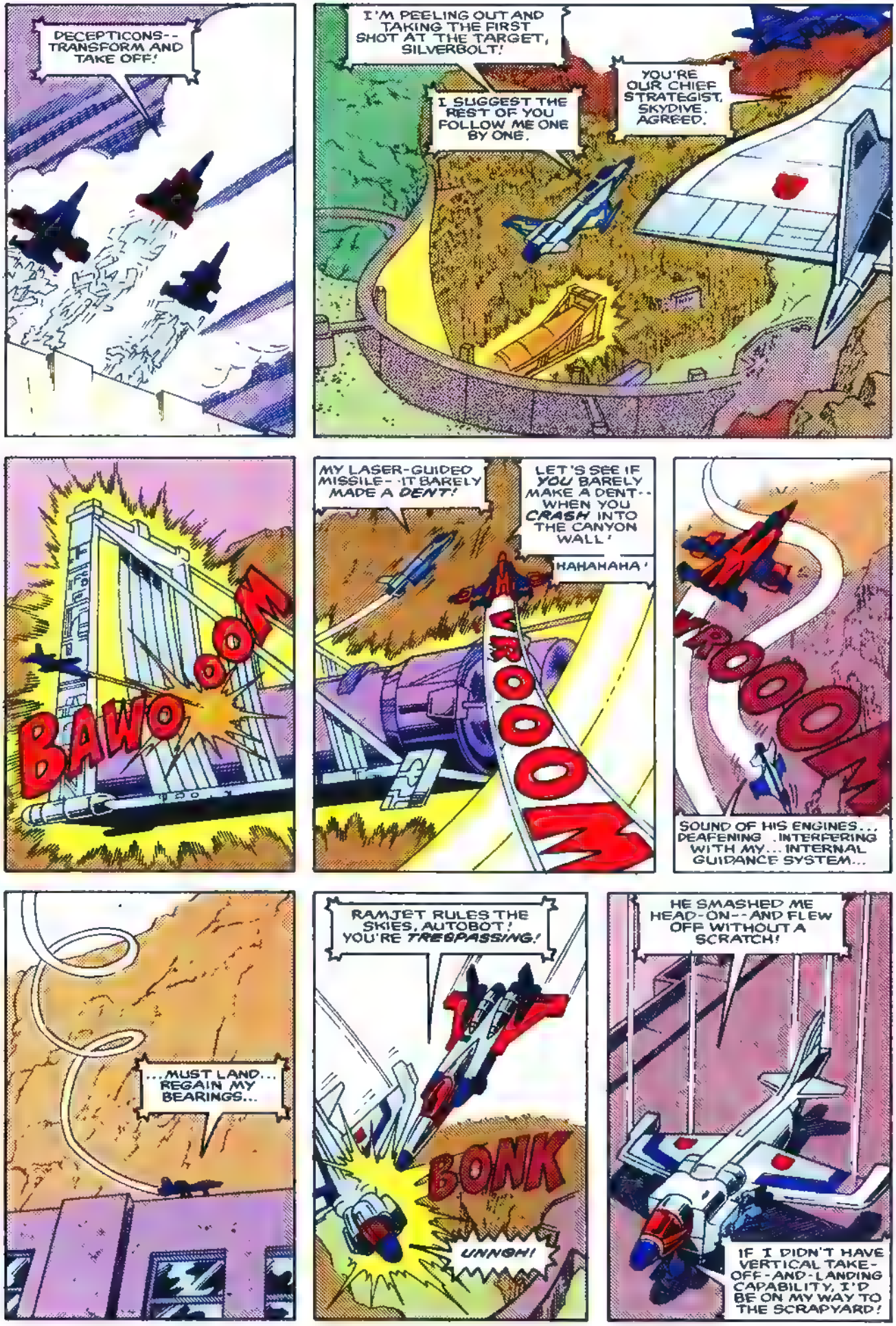

AND, AT HOOVER DAM...
AERIALBOTS--OUR TARGET IS BELOW US! PREPARE TO TAKE OFFENSIVE MEASURES!
WHIRRR
CHHK
CHHK

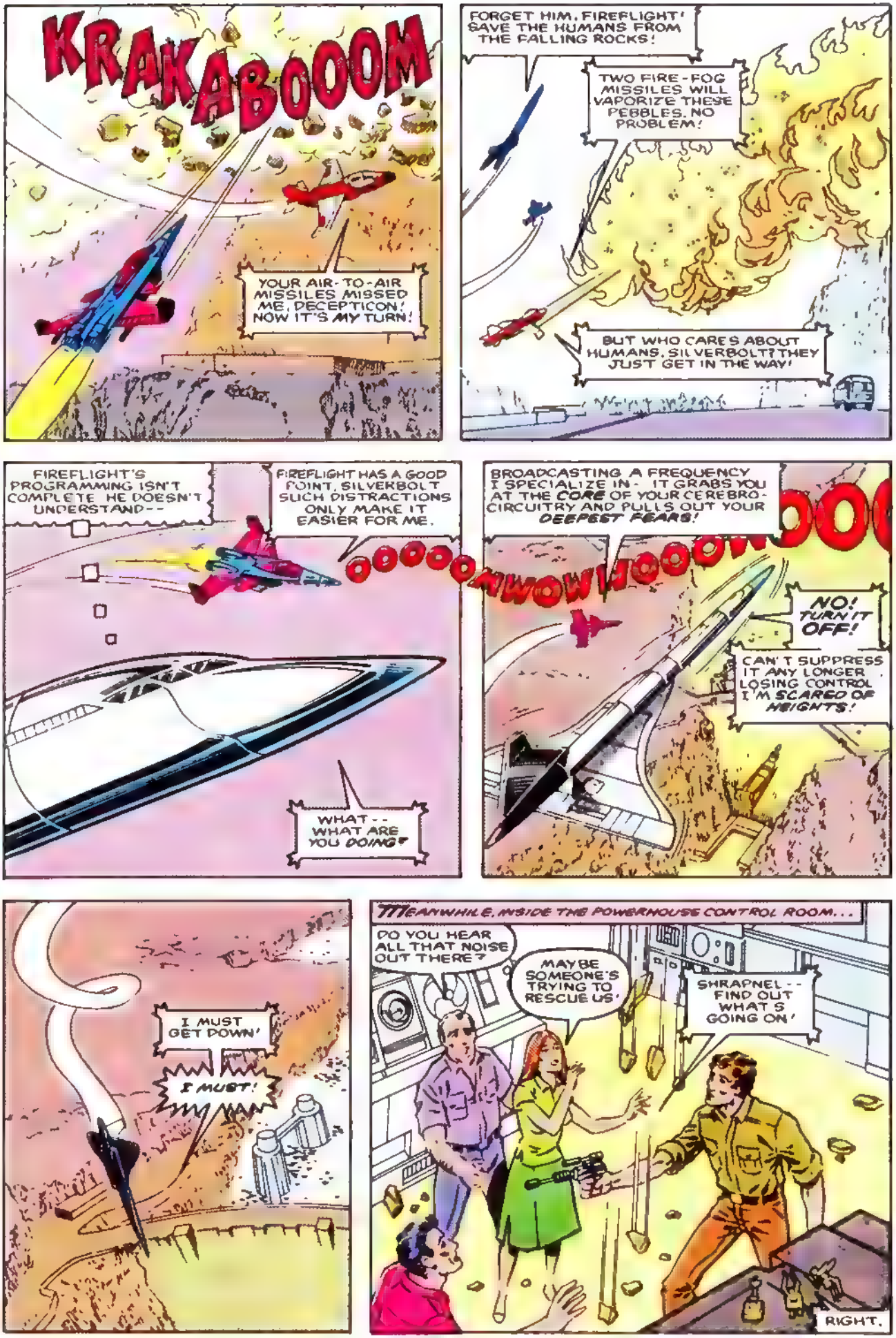

A SQUADRON OF FIVE JETS HAS JUST ARRIVED--BUT WAIT! THEY'RE LED BY AN SST! THEY'RE NOT U S AIR FORCE!
THE DAM'S DESTRUCTION APPEARS IMMINENT!
NEAT-O! I ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE AN SST!


WHIRRR
CHHK
CHHK

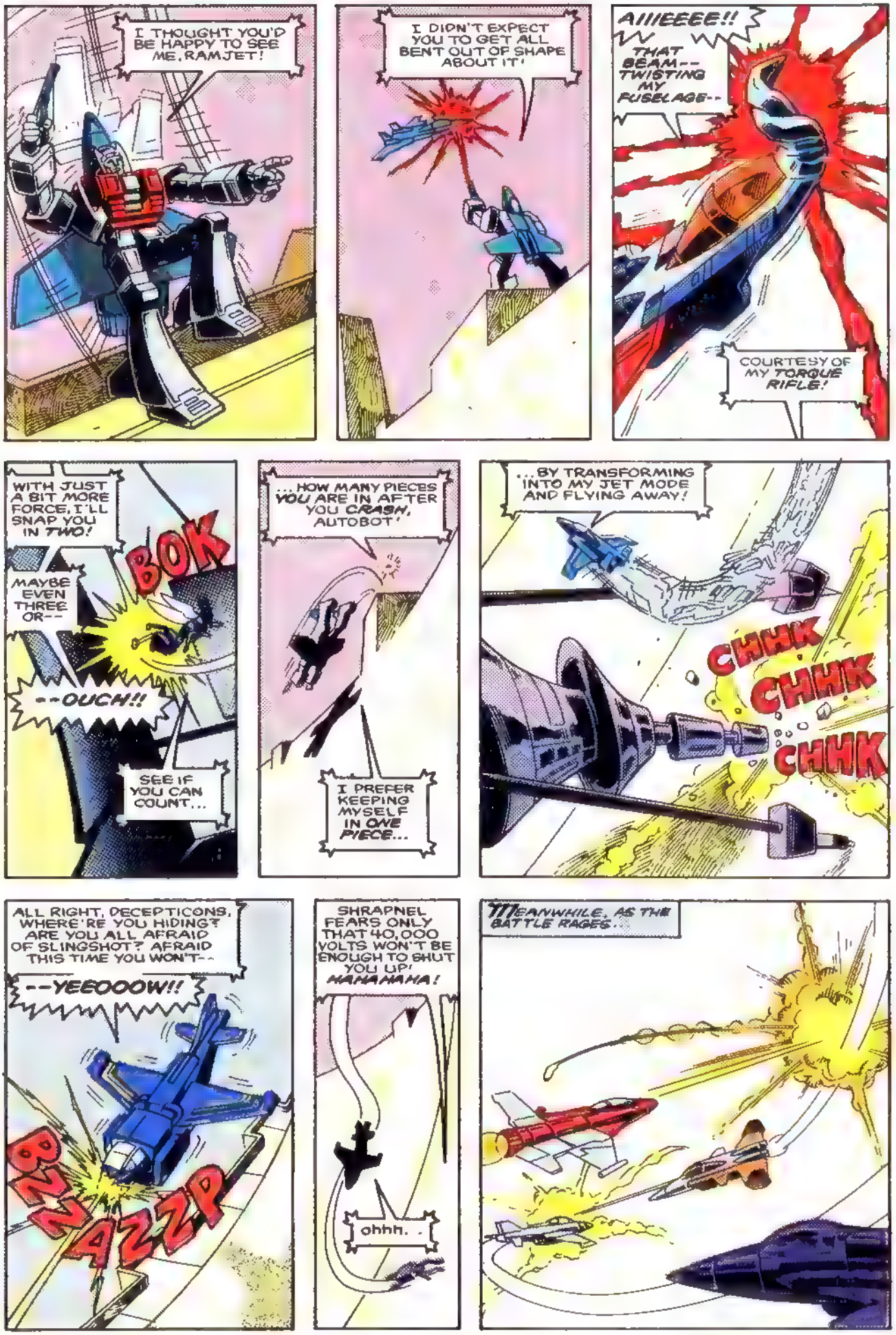
AERIALBOTS, THERE ARE HUMANS ON THE ROAD TO THE SIDE OF THE DAM. OUR ACTIONS MUST NOT ENDANGER THEM IN ANY WAY!
SURE, WHATEVER YOU SAY, SILVERBOLT!

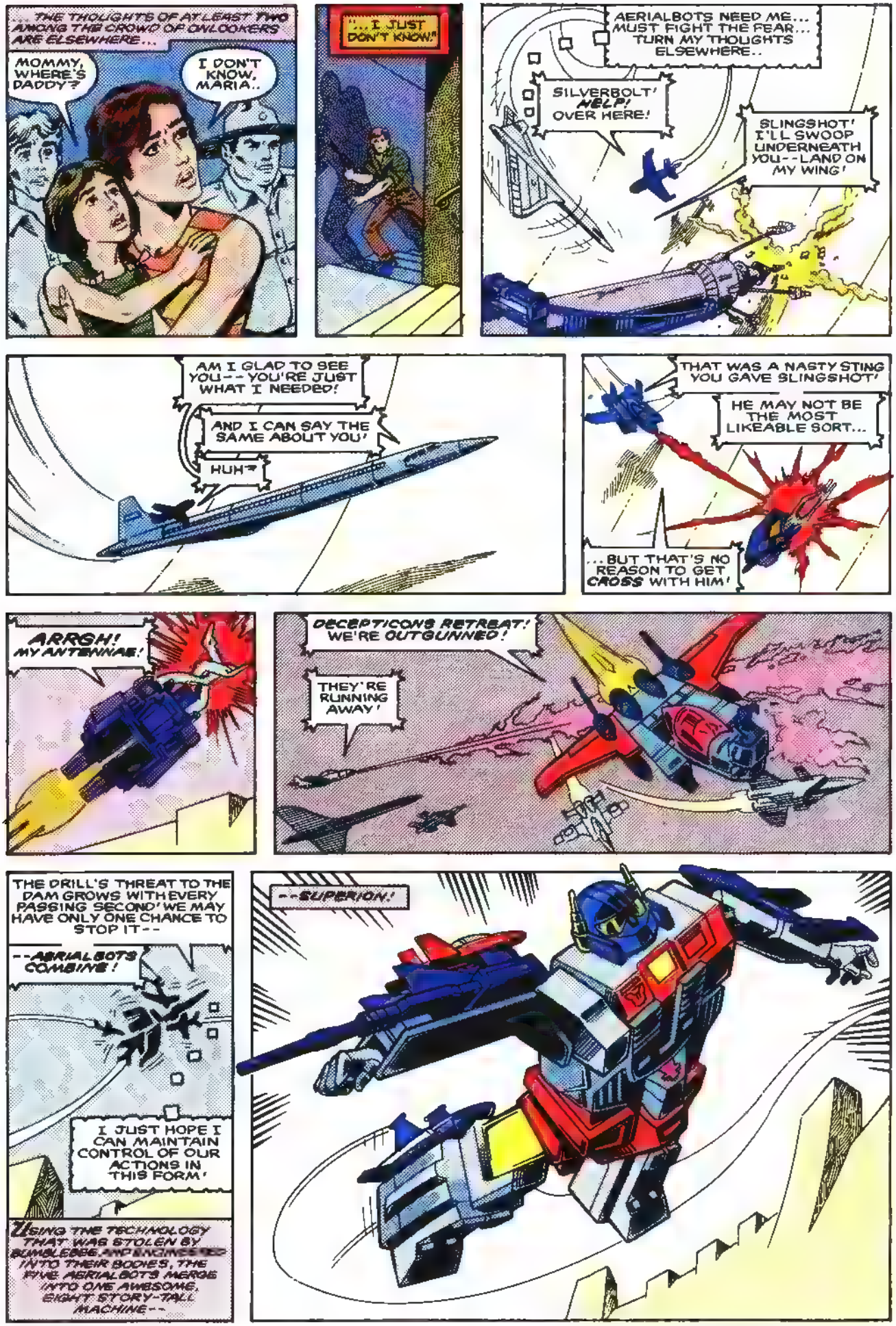
THOSE GUYS ARE INVADING OUR SPACE!
LET'S GET 'EM!


DECEPTICONS--TRANSFORM AND TAKE OFF!
I'M PEELING OUT AND TAKING THE FIRST SHOT AT THE TARGET, SILVERBOLT!
I SUGGEST THE REST OF YOU FOLLOW ME ONE BY ONE.
YOU'RE OUR CHIEF STRATEGIST, SKYDIVE. AGREED.
BAWOOOM
MY LASER-GUIDED MISSILE--IT BARELY MADE A DENT!
LET'S SEE IF YOU BARELY MAKE A DENT--WHEN YOU CRASH INTO THE CANYON WALL!
HAHAHAHA!
VROOOOM
VROOOOM
SOUND OF HIS ENGINES... DEAFENING. INTERFERING WITH MY... INTERNAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM...
...MUST LAND... REGAIN MY BEARINGS...
RAMJET RULES THE SKIES, AUTOBOT! YOU'RE TRESPASSING!
BONK
UNNGH!
HE SMASHED ME HEAD-ON--AND FLEW OFF WITHOUT A SCRATCH!
IF I DIDN'T HAVE VERTICAL TAKE-OFF-AND-LANDING CAPABILITY, I'D BE ON MY WAY TO THE SCRAPYARD!


KRAKABOOOM
YOUR AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES MISSED ME, DECEPTICON! NOW IT'S MY TURN!
FORGET HIM, FIREFLIGHT! SAVE THE HUMANS FROM THE FALLING ROCKS!
TWO FIRE-FOG MISSILES WILL VAPORIZE THESE PEBBLES. NO PROBLEM!
BUT WHO CARES ABOUT HUMANS, SILVERBOLT? THEY JUST GET IN THE WAY!
FIREFLIGHT'S PROGRAMMING ISN'T COMPLETE. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND--
FIREFLIGHT HAS A GOOD POINT, SILVERBOLT. SUCH DISTRACTIONS ONLY MAKE IT EASIER FOR ME.
WHAT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
BROADCASTING A FREQUENCY I SPECIALIZE IN- IT GRABS YOU AT THE CORE OF YOUR CEREBRO-CIRCUITRY AND PULLS OUT YOUR DEEPEST FEARS!
NO! TURN IT OFF!
CAN'T SUPPRESS IT ANY LONGER. LOSING CONTROL. I'M SCARED OF HEIGHTS!
I MUST GET DOWN!
I MUST!
MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE POWERHOUSE CONTROL ROOM...
DO YOU HEAR ALL THAT NOISE OUT THERE?
MAYBE SOMEONE'S TRYING TO RESCUE US!
SHRAPNEL-- FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!
RIGHT.

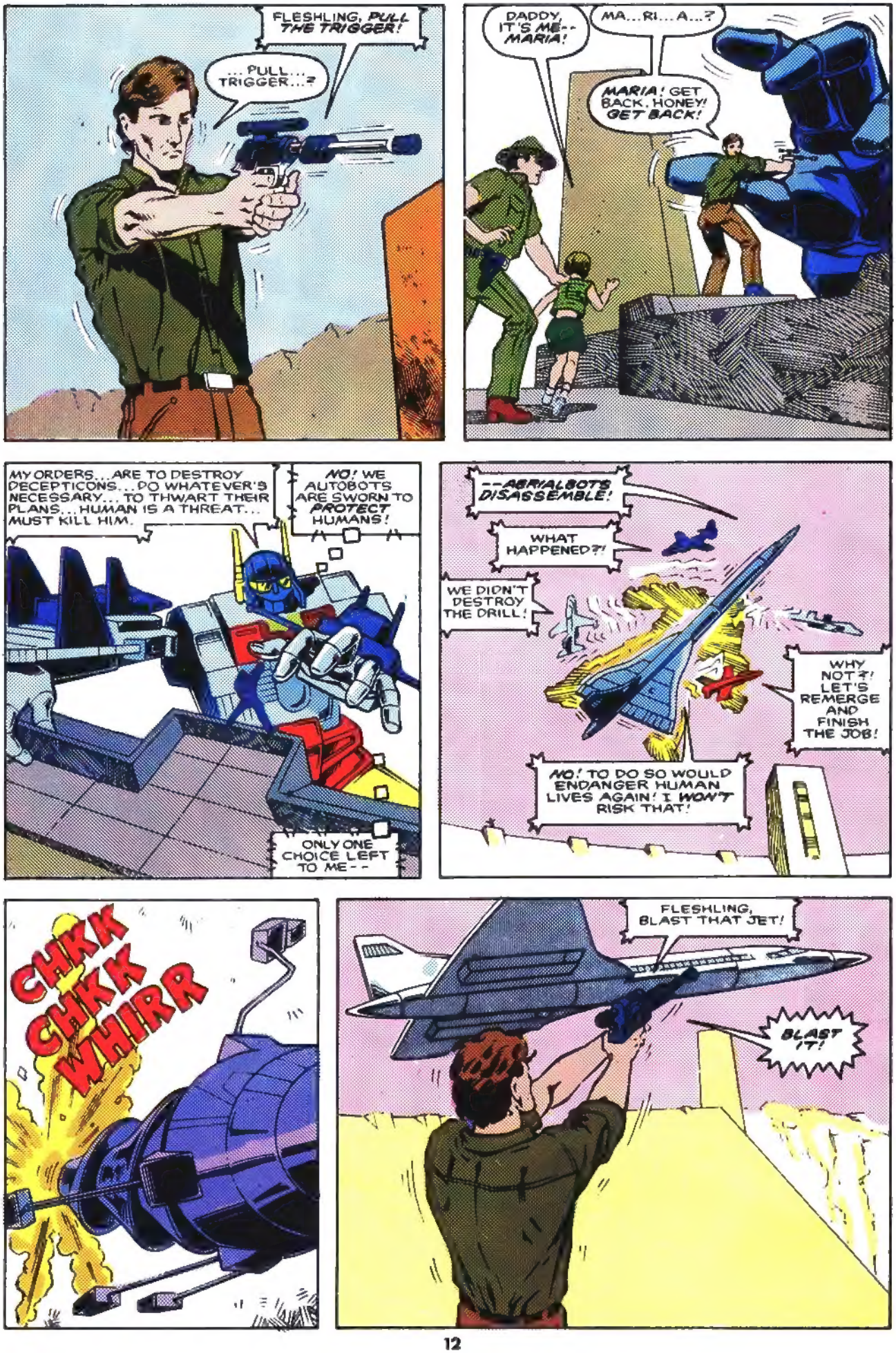
THE EXTERNAL TV CAMERA SHOWS AUTOBOT JETS ATTACKING THE DRILL — BUT SO FAR RAMJET DIRGE AND THRUST ARE STOPPING THEM!
NOTHING MUST PREVENT THE DRILL FROM TUNNELLING THROUGH THE DAM! FOR MY PLAN TO SUCCEED, ALL WATER IN THE RESERVOIR BEHIND THE DAM MUST FLOW THROUGH THE PIPELINE AND ACROSS THE SPACE BRIDGE TO CYBERTRON!
THERE THE WATER WILL TURN MASSIVE TURBINES-- CREATING ENOUGH ENERGY TO POWER CYBERTRON FOR YEARS!
ENOUGH ENERGY TO MAKE CYBERTRON THE PRE-EMINENT PLANET IN THE GALAXY!
B-BUT THERE'S A TWO-YEAR SUPPLY OF THE COLORADO RIVER'S WATER IN THAT RESERVOIR! IF YOU TAKE IT OUT YOU'LL TURN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST INTO A WASTELAND!
FLESH, NOT WHEN I AM FINISHED! ALL OF EARTH WILL BE A WASTELAND!
SHOCKWAVE, SHRAPNEL, BLACKARACHNIA AND HELP YOUR DECEPTICON BRETHREN DESTROY THE AUTOBOTS!
YES MEGATRON!
EARTH WASTELAND!
WE SHOWED THEM WHO'S BOSS OF THE SKIES, RIGHT, THRUST?
RIGHT, RAMJET!
THAT IS UNFAIR, FRIENDS! YOU LEFT ME OUT OF THE VOTING!
AND AIR RAID DOESN'T LIKE TO BE LEFT OUT OF ANYTHING!
WHAT--?!
WHERE'D HE COME FROM?


I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HAPPY TO SEE ME, RAMJET!
I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO GET ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE ABOUT IT!
AIIIEEEE!!
THAT BEAM-- TWISTING MY FUSELAGE--
COURTESY OF MY TORQUE RIFLE!
WITH JUST A BIT MORE FORCE, I'LL SNAP YOU IN TWO!
BOK
MAYBE EVEN THREE OR--
--OUCH!!
SEE IF YOU CAN COUNT...
...HOW MANY PIECES YOU ARE IN AFTER YOU CRASH, AUTOBOT!
I PREFER KEEPING MYSELF IN ONE PIECE...
...BY TRANSFORMING INTO MY JET MODE AND FLYING AWAY!
CHHK
CHHK
CHHK
ALL RIGHT, DECEPTICONS, WHERE'RE YOU HIDING? ARE YOU ALL AFRAID OF SLINGSHOT? AFRAID THIS TIME YOU WON'T--
--YEEOOOW!!
ZZZAZZP
SHRAPNEL FEARS ONLY THAT 40,000 VOLTS WON'T BE ENOUGH TO SHUT YOU UP! HAHAHAHA!
ohhh. .
MEANWHILE, AS THE BATTLE RAGES...

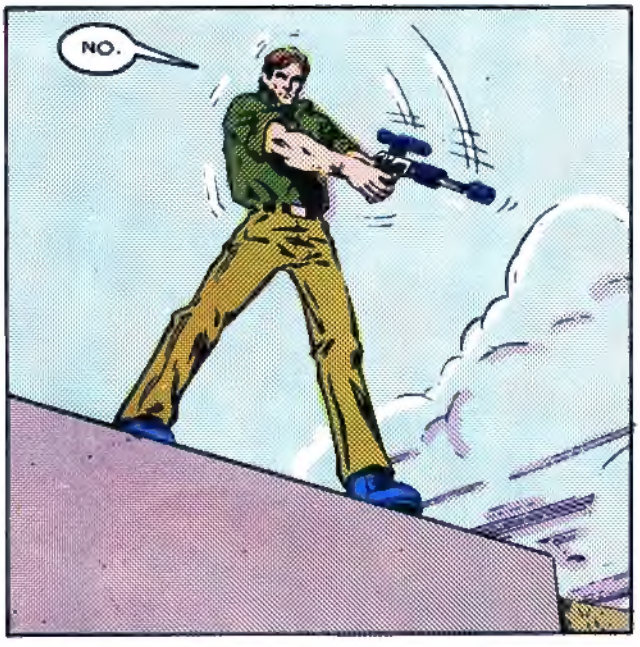

...THE THOUGHTS OF AT LEAST TWO AMONG THE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS ARE ELSEWHERE...
MOMMY, WHERE'S DADDY?
I DON'T KNOW, MARIA..
"...I JUST DON'T KNOW."
AERIALBOTS NEED ME... MUST FIGHT THE FEAR... TURN MY THOUGHTS ELSEWHERE..
SILVERBOLT! HELP! OVER HERE!
SLINGSHOT! I'LL SWOOP UNDERNEATH YOU--LAND ON MY WING!
AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU--YOU'RE JUST WHAT I NEEDED!
AND I CAN SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU!
HUH?
THAT WAS A NASTY STING YOU GAVE SLINGSHOT!
HE MAY NOT BE THE MOST LIKEABLE SORT...
...BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO GET CROSS WITH HIM!
ARRGH! MY ANTENNAE!
DECEPTICONS RETREAT! WE'RE OUTGUNNED!
THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY!
THE DRILL'S THREAT TO THE DAM GROWS WITH EVERY PASSING SECOND! WE MAY HAVE ONLY ONE CHANCE TO STOP IT--
--AERIALBOTS COMBINE!
I JUST HOPE I CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL OF OUR ACTIONS IN THIS FORM!
USING THE TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS STOLEN BY BUMBLEBEE AND ENGINEERED INTO THEIR BODIES, THE FIVE AERIALBOTS MERGE INTO ONE AWESOME, EIGHT STORY-TALL MACHINE--
--SUPERION!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

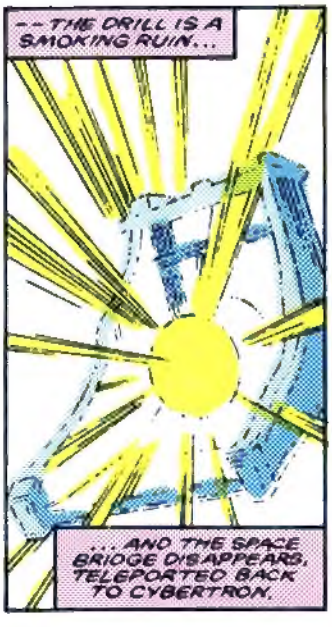
WRRUUNK
THIS DRILL WILL BE NONFUNCTIONAL IN NO TIME!
YOU'LL BE A PILE OF SPARE PARTS BEFORE YOU CAN DO THAT, AUTOBOT!
FLESHLING, I GIVE YOU THE HONOUR OF DESTROYING YOUR LAST HOPE! FIRE!
DRILL... NONFUNCTIONAL.
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?! FIRE!
YOU THREATEN ME--
--YOU MUST DIE!
NO! HE'S A HUMAN, SUPERION!
PULL MY TRIGGER, FLESHLING! PULL MY TRIGGER!
SUPERION, STOP! LISTEN TO ME! THIS IS SILVERBOLT!
FOR A MOMENT, TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL...
...UNTIL...
DADDY!
THAT'S MY DADDY!
MARIA! COME BACK!
DADDY!
DAD.. DY...?
WHA--?


FLESHLING, PULL THE TRIGGER!
...PULL...TRIGGER...?
DADDY, IT'S ME-- MARIA!
MA...RI...A...?
MARIA! GET BACK, HONEY! GET BACK!
MY ORDERS...ARE TO DESTROY DECEPTICONS...DO WHATEVER'S NECESSARY...TO THWART THEIR PLANS...HUMAN IS A THREAT... MUST KILL HIM.
NO! WE AUTOBOTS ARE SWORN TO PROTECT HUMANS!
ONLY ONE CHOICE LEFT TO ME--
--AERIALBOTS DISASSEMBLE!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
WE DIDN'T DESTROY THE DRILL!
WHY NOT?! LET'S REMERGE AND FINISH THE JOB!
NO! TO DO SO WOULD ENDANGER HUMAN LIVES AGAIN! I WON'T RISK THAT!
CHKK CHKK WHIRR
FLESHLING, BLAST THAT JET!
BLAST IT!

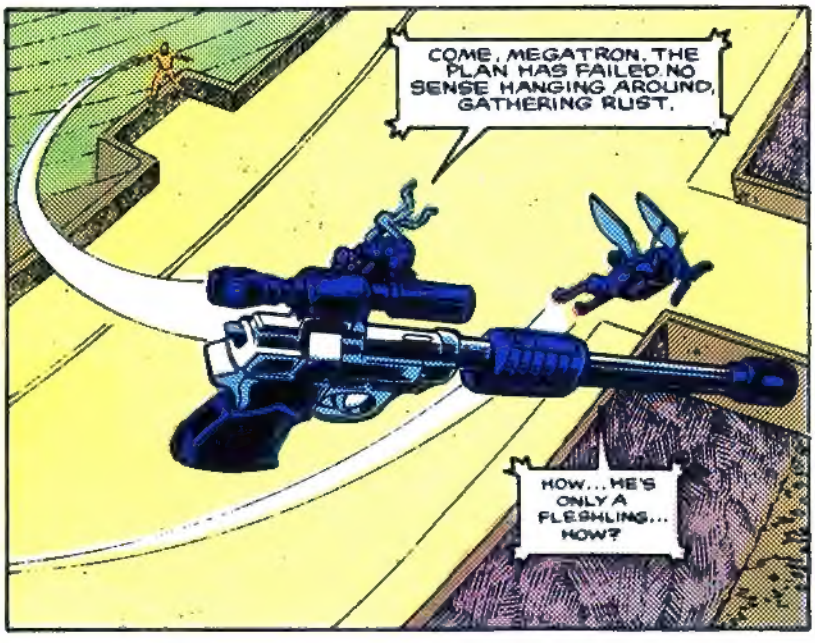
MARIA... KEEP THINKING OF MARIA... ALWAYS REMEMBER MARIA... AND I'LL BE ALL RIGHT...

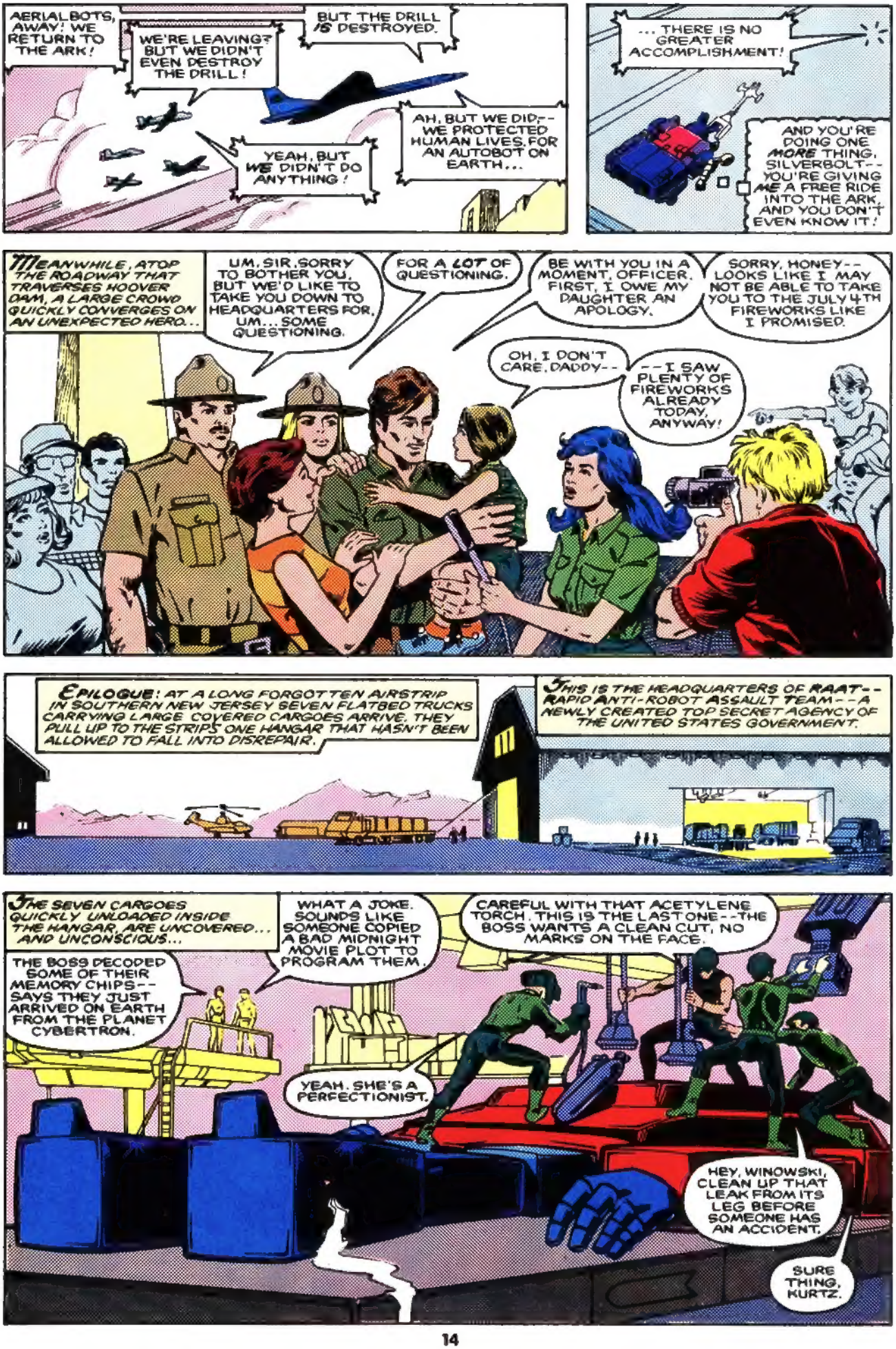

NO.

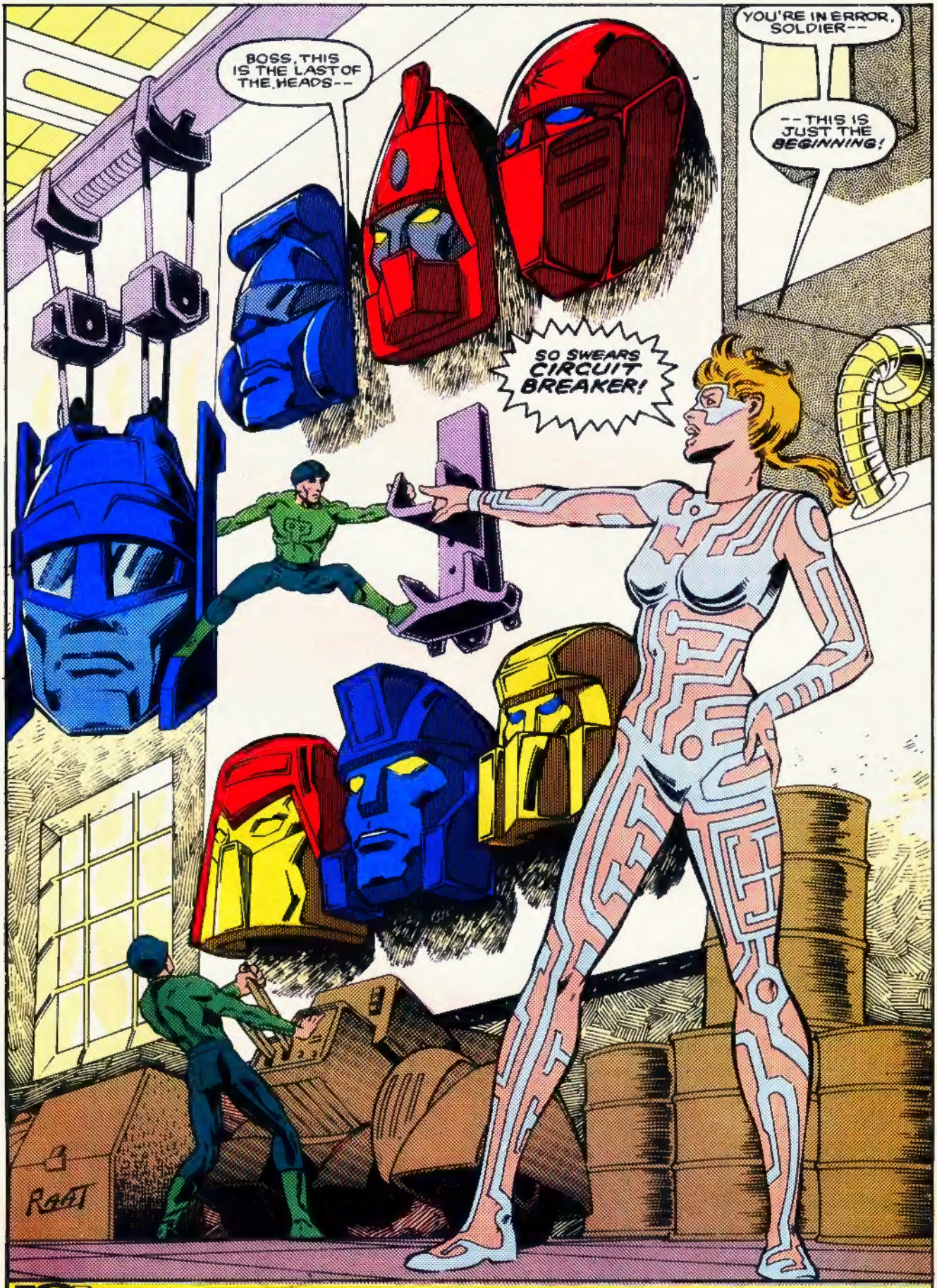
BAR ROOOM
IN AN INSTANT, IT'S OVER--


--THE DRILL IS A SMOKING RUIN...
...AND THE SPACE BRIDGE DISAPPEARS, TELEPORTED BACK TO CYBERTRON.

NOOO!!
YOU BROKE MY CONTROL OVER YOU! BUT HOW?! NOW?!


COME, MEGATRON. THE PLAN HAS FAILED. NO SENSE HANGING AROUND, GATHERING RUST.
HOW... HE'S ONLY A FLESHLING... HOW?


AERIAL BOTS, AWAY! WE RETURN TO THE ARK!
WE'RE LEAVING? BUT WE DIDN'T EVEN DESTROY THE DRILL!
BUT THE DRILL IS DESTROYED.
YEAH, BUT WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
AH, BUT WE DID,-- WE PROTECTED HUMAN LIVES, FOR AN AUTOBOT ON EARTH...
... THERE IS NO GREATER ACCOMPLISHMENT!
AND YOU'RE DOING ONE MORE THING, SILVERBOLT-- YOU'RE GIVING ME A FREE RIDE INTO THE ARK, AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT!
MEANWHILE, ATOP THE ROADWAY THAT TRAVERSES HOOVER DAM, A LARGE CROWD QUICKLY CONVERGES ON AN UNEXPECTED HERO...
UM, SIR, SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT WE'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU DOWN TO HEADQUARTERS FOR, UM... SOME QUESTIONING.
FOR A LOT OF QUESTIONING.
BE WITH YOU IN A MOMENT, OFFICER. FIRST, I OWE MY DAUGHTER AN APOLOGY.
SORRY, HONEY-- LOOKS LIKE I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE YOU TO THE JULY 4TH FIREWORKS LIKE I PROMISED.
OH, I DON'T CARE, DADDY--
--I SAW PLENTY OF FIREWORKS ALREADY TODAY, ANYWAY!
EPILOGUE: AT A LONG FORGOTTEN AIRSTRIP IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY SEVEN FLATBED TRUCKS CARRYING LARGE COVERED CARGOES ARRIVE. THEY PULL UP TO THE STRIP'S ONE HANGAR THAT HASN'T BEEN ALLOWED TO FALL INTO DISREPAIR.
THIS IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF RAAT-- RAPID ANTI-ROBOT ASSAULT TEAM--A NEWLY CREATED TOP SECRET AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
THE SEVEN CARGOES QUICKLY UNLOADED INSIDE THE HANGAR, ARE UNCOVERED... AND UNCONSCIOUS...
THE BOSS DECODED SOME OF THEIR MEMORY CHIPS-- SAYS THEY JUST ARRIVED ON EARTH FROM THE PLANET CYBERTRON.
WHAT A JOKE. SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE COPIED A BAD MIDNIGHT MOVIE PLOT TO PROGRAM THEM.
CAREFUL WITH THAT ACETYLENE TORCH. THIS IS THE LAST ONE--THE BOSS WANTS A CLEAN CUT, NO MARKS ON THE FACE.
YEAH, SHE'S A PERFECTIONIST.
HEY, WINOWSKI, CLEAN UP THAT LEAK FROM ITS LEG BEFORE SOMEONE HAS AN ACCIDENT.
SURE THING, KURTZ.



NEXT: HEAVY TRAFFIC!